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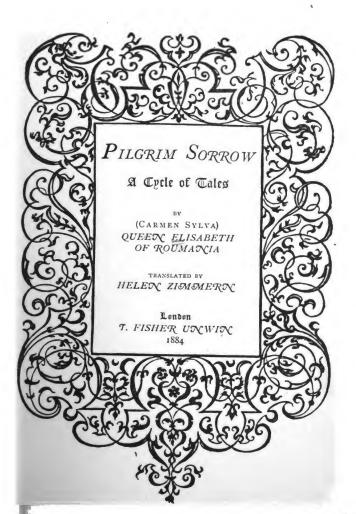


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INTRODUCTION.



OUMANIA, Bulgaria, Servia, and the other new countries situated in the far East of Europe, are so apt to be

associated in our minds with the tiresome and unanswered Eastern question, that we certainly give both land and people less attention than many of them deserve. And not least interesting among them all is Roumania, which during the Turkish war gained for itself the respect, and admiration of its stronger brothers and sisters;

and which has, in a graceful fairy tale, been described as "the spoiled child of Europe" by the lady who sits upon its throne. Writing fanciful stories, aphorisms, novelettes, and poems is this queen's delight, and she has, within the short time since she began to publish, acquired for herself a name among German authors. For she writes in German, which is her native tongue, and under the pseudonym of Carmen Sylva, in which she seeks some reminiscence of the forests that were her earliest and dearest It was amid the green woods and friends. the vine-clad hills of the Rhine that her young intelligence was unfolded; she was born in this much-sung region, indeed in its fairest part, and has a true German's pride in that noble river. As a child she sat for hours upon the lap of the aged patriot-poet, E. M. Arndt, and he stimulated in her that love of her native land which was also hers by birthright, for her princely forefathers had fought and suffered in the cause of German liberation, and had never joined the Confederation of the Rhine.

Carmen Sylva, or, more properly, Queen Elisabeth of Roumania, is the only daughter of Prince Hermann of Wied Neu-Wied, a tiny principality situated between Coblenz and Andernach; and here, surrounded by a devoted, simple, and cultured family, she spent her girl-hood, whose quiet, even course was only interrupted at rare intervals by visits to the Berlin court and travels with her aunt, the Grand Duchess Helena of Russia. Her parents were anxious she should be taken out of the mournful home surroundings, where Sorrow had taken up an abode she rarely quitted. Sickness and

suffering among those around her had made Princess Elisabeth early acquainted with pain.

In the last number of the present cycle the reader may notice that the tone changes and becomes elegiac and subjective. Though slightly veiled, it is impossible to ignore that this is an autobiography, that the soul of the queen is laid bare before us; and a fair and noble soul it is. Indeed, those who are best acquainted with the details of her life, can best see how exactly they have been reproduced. There is, to begin with, her undaunted courage and desire to know, her love of music, in which she attained a certain proficiency under the tuition of Madame Schumann and Rubinstein, but whose execution she has had to abandon owing to weakened health, though the listening to music remains to her a source

of keen delight and enthusiasm. The woods that surrounded her castle home were, as we have seen, her earliest and most intimate friends, to whom she confided all her childish griefs and aspirations, who alone were allowed to listen to the lyrics she sang and penned in secret, who told her fairy tales in the rustling of their leaves, and who comforted her sorrows. At the age of eleven (not two years, as the fable says) it was her lot to witness the nobly borne death struggles of a most gifted and loveable vounger brother, whose memory has remained to her a religion, and whose life she has written for her family, illustrated with over two hundred paintings from her own pencil. For five years after the boy's death her mother was prostrated upon a couch of sickness, while the Prince, her father, was a permanent invalid, suffering from

chronic lung disease that grew yearly more hopeless. Her girlhood's friend, too, "the fair maiden flower," she saw fade and die. No wonder her eyes grew weak with weeping! It was then she was sent travelling to distract her. While at St. Petersburg she had a severe attack of typhus fever, and before she was convalescent she was told that during her absence her beloved father had been laid in the grave. Then she grew homesick for the old house in which she had seen so many die, and for a long time she was sad and weary of her life. "Must everything I love be borne to the grave?" she asks in a plaintive little song, written in her diary at that time. In poetry she found her only outlet, her only consolation; but as yet she did not publish; these utterances were for herself alone, to give herself relief and voice.

Then at last she was aroused to work and duty by the claims of matrimony, which for a long while she had resisted. Her desires had not been towards marriage, and she had once playfully said that the only throne that could tempt her would be that of Roumania; there she could find something for her hand to do. In 1869 Prince Charles of Hohenzollern asked her to be his bride, and share with him that newly founded throne. And here she did find the work "mountains high," of which Sorrow tells her; and how nobly, admirably, wisely she has attacked these labours, what she has done and does towards civilizing and educating her half-barbarian subjects, that lives in their hearts, is repeated by their tongues, and has already found echo in song and story.

There stands in the public place of Bucharest

a statue representing the queen in the act of giving a draught of water to a wounded soldier. It was subscribed for by the wives of the officers of the Roumanian army, and intended as an enduring testimonial of their gratitude to her whom the popular voice names muma rantilor, that is, mother of the wounded. For what she did during the war of 1877-78 is unforgotten, unforgetable, by her subjects. She met every train of wounded that came from the battlefield, she organized hospitals and convalescent homes, she was present at operations, she comforted the dying and wept with the survivors. No wonder her people adore her, no wonder that it is greatly due to her that King Charles is a popular sovereign although he reigns over a people alien to him in blood and language. "You will have a noble mission," he said to her

on the day of their betrothal; "you must comfort tenderly when I have been too harsh, and you may petition for all."

But even after her marriage Sorrow did not depart from Carmen Sylva's side. She was to know the joy of being a mother; but not for many years, as she says, was this high dignity to be hers. She had to see the grave close over her child's golden head, and no other has ever come to comfort her for this loss. Her greatest treasure, her greatest earthly happiness, and all her hopes were buried with this little girl. The sorrow that sprung thence made her truly a poet and an author. She translated and published the Roumanian nursery songs that had been beloved of her child, hoping that other children in her distant German home might love them too. She put into verse the

delicate little sayings of her babe, but those have not been permitted to see the light of day; she poured into song the whole depth and agony of her grief. And after having years ago renounced all such hopes, she found that Sorrow had made her an artist, and that the world cared to listen to her speech.

Since 1878 the queen's pen has been most productive, although indeed what she has given to the public was not all written since that date. The stories here reproduced in English dress quickly gained for her warm friends upon the Continent, many of whom asked themselves, how comes it that a woman who occupies a throne beside a beloved husband; who is young, beautiful, and courted; who surely has beheld life only from its most brilliant side, can have looked so deep into the human soul,

and learnt to know so well its woes and struggles? The answer lies in the brief sketch I have above given of her life. She has drunk deep from the cup of suffering, and therefore she could write the tales of "Pilgrim Sorrow."

H.Z.

London,

October, 1883.

THE CHILD OF THE SUN.



The Child of the Sun.

IFE was a radiant maiden, the daughter of the Sun, endowed with all the charm and grace, all the power and

happiness, which only such a mother could give to her child. Her hairs were sunbeams, her eyes gleaming stars. Flowers dropped from her hands, seeds sprang into life from beneath her footsteps; sweet scents and songs of birds floated around her; from her lips uncounted songs welled forth. Sounds like the gurgling of a thousand streams were heard from out her garments, and yet they were only made of flower petals and covered with tender webs, in which numberless dew-drops twinkled. Glow-worms encircled the royal brow like a diadem; birds bore her train over rough paths. When her foot touched thorns they grew green and blossomed; when she laid her soft hand upon the bare rock it became covered with moss and fern. The Sun had bestowed on her glorious child power over all things, and as companions and playfellows she had given to her Happiness and Love. In those days there was much joy and blessedness on earth, and no pen can recount, no pencil paint, how glorious it all was. It was just one eternal May day, and the august mother looked down from afar upon her daughter's glad games, and blessed the earth upon which her child was so happy.

But deep down in the earth there lived an evil spirit called Strife. The Kobolds brought him news of all the beauty that was outside, and of the young sovereign who reigned so proudly and lovingly over the whole world, and who played so sweetly with Happiness and Love. First he was angry at the tidings, for he desired to be sole ruler of all things; but after a while a great curiosity took hold of him-and something beside, something hot and wild, he knew not himself what. Only he wanted to get outside at all costs. So he began to move a mighty rock from the centre of the earth, and he cast it up on high. Then he kindled a great fire, so that all the rocks and the metals above him melted and poured their glowing, scorching streams over the paradise of earth. And in the midst of these flames Strife rose up, clothed in dazzling armour, with flowing locks and contracted brows. In his hands he held a great block of stone, and he peered around him with his piercing black eyes, seeking what he should destroy first. But of a sudden he let fall the rock, crossed his arms over his breast, and stared down upon the garden of earth, like one in a dream. He stood thus a long, long while, gazing down, silent with wonder, like to a statue. Suddenly he struck his brow with his fist.

"What! I have lived down there, among cold stones, in the darkness, and outside is such beauty! What must the sovereign be like to whom all this belongs?"

The thought brought life once more into this Titanic figure. He stepped with giant strides down into the blooming, scented world, treading through it like a storm-wind, stamping down the flowers, breaking down the trees, without knowing it. He must find the mistress of all this fair earth. He even passed across the sea, making it pile up waves tower high, and once more he climbed a lofty mountain, in his hot impatience to gain a survey. Then he saw upon a meadow-side that which he sought so ardently. Resting her foot upon cloudy, silverfeathered flower seeds, her garments gathered up around her, Life was floating by upon her journey from flower to flower, singing as she went. Upon her shoulders twittered a pair of birds; upon her finger she bore a bee, to whom she showed where the best honey lay hid. She had left Love behind her in a wood, busy building a nest, while Happiness was sleeping upon a mossy bed beside a waterfall, after having

played antics innumerable. Therefore Life was floating forth alone, singing a morning carol to her mother the Sun. Of a sudden she beheld something gleam and glitter in front of her, and when she raised her eyes, she saw Strife planted before her, gazing at her fixedly. His bright armour reflected her glistening tresses. Life quailed at the sight of this mighty man with the burning eyes, her footslipped from its seed-cloud, which sped on without her. She would have fallen had she not grasped a birch branch and slid herself down by it upon a mossy rock.

"Aha!" cried Strife, "have I found you at last, you who dispute my empire, you who wield the sceptre here on earth? Who are you, little maiden, who venture upon such liberties?"

These haughty words restored to Life all her pride and loftiness.

"I am the child of the Sun, and the earth is mine; it was given to me by my royal mother, and all bends before my power."

Speaking thus she threw back her fair head proudly, so that the Sun lighted up all her face. Strife saw it and was drunk with love.

"If I overcome you so that you are mine, then you and the earth will both belong to me."

"Try," said Life, "I am stronger than you."

"I am to wrestle with you, you tender flower! Well, if I do so I must put aside my armour, or I shall crush you."

And he did so, laying his shield and armour upon the grass. Then he sprang at her to encircle her waist and to lift her into the air. But at that moment roses sprang forth from her

girdle, and their thorns pricked him so sharply that he had to let her go. He tried to catch her by the hair, but this scorched him. Then he tore off his golden chain and tried to bind her hands with it. She only bowed her head; then the chain melted in his grasp. Suddenly he felt his wrists clasped by her tender fingers. He tried to shake her off, but she would not let go. He lifted her from the ground; she only floated but would not let him loose, and as often as she grew weary the Sun gave her new strength. Then he strove to draw her under the shade of the trees; but these inclined to one side that the Sun might protect her darling. A whole day did this wrestling last. At last Strife saw that the Sun inclined towards setting, and though she lingered she had to depart. Then Life lost her strength, but Strife grew doubly strong. He shook her

off and rushed upon her. Soon her garments lay torn upon the sward, her hair lost its scorching might, and before dawn broke the chaste maiden knelt trembling and red with shame upon the earth, entreating forbearance and mercy with sobs and tears. At this Strife set up a laugh that made the earth quake, and the rocks reechoed it like to pealing thunder.

Terrified, Life sank to earth in a swoon. Strife raised her high in air in his mighty arms and bore her away. Her lovely head was bent back, her hair swept the ground, her lips were half opened as though no breath were in them, the wondrous limbs that had resisted him so long hung faint and powerless, and wherever he bore her there the grass faded, the leaves decayed and fell from off the trees, and there blew a storm wind that froze the limbs of Life.

"Wait," said Strife, and he covered her with kisses; "you shall warm at my fires. Only I must hide you from the Sun or I shall lose you again."

And he vanished with her into the mountains.

The whole earth grew barren and desolate, the birds sang no more, the flowers drooped, only on the spot where Life had sank down fainting there bloomed some crocuses; but even these could not endure. The Sun grew pale with grief, and wept and beckoned with a white sheet that fell upon the earth and dispersed into thousands of tiny fragments, while the mountains upon which Strife's armour had lain became ice for all time.

When Love and Happiness found that they had lost Life they began to roam the world in search of her, asking all things after their beloved companion. They no longer recognised their earth garden in its changed form, and they wept bitterly. They wandered past hill and dale, alongside the rivers that lay frozen and ice-clad, and they called aloud for Life, for they deemed that they must find her. One day they leant wearily against a tall rock, when of a sudden they heard a sound within it as of gurgling waters. Flushed with joy they looked at one another and both exclaimed: "Here she is, here; we hear sounds of Life," and they began to touch the rock and to call and listen round about it. until they found an opening whence a spring gushed forth. Softly they called "Life," and there she stood before them, joyless, downcast, with weary steps, laying her finger upon her lips.

"My lord slumbers, do not wake him," she whispered sadly.

"Dear Life, come out with us; your garden is bare, your mother is pale, and we have roamed so long in search of you. Oh, come forth once more."

And they drew Life forth with them, and as she took the first step outside snowdrops peeped up, and at her next step violets bloomed, and as she laid her weary hand upon a tree the buds swelled and broke into leaf.

"Behold," cried Love and Happiness, "you still have your old might. Oh, do be joyous! Look up at the Sun that she, too, may laugh."

But when the Sun saw her child so weak and weary, she could not refrain from weeping, though she strove to smile and warm her daughter with her hot rays. Again and again she had to press her cloud-sheet before her eyes, and then her tears dropped down upon the earth. Life still crept along, but wearily. Then came a swallow.

"Hold on to my wings, dear Life; I will bear you a bit;" and thus she once more floated through the blue air, until the swallow was tired.

Then the stork came and said—

"Kneel on my back and put your arms round my neck; I will carry you further."

And he bore her far, far, and wherever he alighted a babe was born, and Love and Happiness followed in their wake, and dwelt beside the child. And the whole earth grew green and bright. The birds sang again, and every sunbeam gave new power to Life, so that once more she could stand on the mountain tops, a blooming, splendid woman, full of grace and majesty, with earnest eyes and serious mouth, her hands filled with the fruits that should make rich the world.

But deep down in the earth Strife, who had awoke long ago, sought for his absent wife. stormed out into the world, and everywhere he beheld her traces, but herself he could not find. How many of her gifts did he not destroy in his wild haste! Sometimes he would halt puzzled, piercing the distance with his stern looks. Ay, he was near despairing, for she, from whom he could no longer live apart, fled from him ever. Now a tree hid her with his foliage, now a bird in his nest, now a flower beneath its leaves, now the mist in its veil; and if he came too near to her an eagle would bear her on his pinions up to the Sun, until Strife had swept past below, when she returned endowed with new power and glory. But at last, at last, he did catch sight of her as she was pressing a vine wreath upon the locks of Happiness, and

sending a gleam from her forehead into the eves of Love. Then he stepped before her, looked at her and beckoned. He must have done something to her, for of pride and resistance there was no longer a trace. He strode before her without looking round, and she bowed her lovely head and followed him; and when her comrades would have held her back, she only beckoned with her hand, and stepped after him silently, wrapped in robes of mist that swept the falling leaves, and was like to an echo of the gurgling that had once sounded in her robes. She went into the mountain, bearing with her fruits and grapes, that the Kobolds pressed into wine with which they made to themselves merry days.

And she brought forth two children, a boy and a maid. Both were very pale, and had large dark eyes. The boy had something wild about him, like his father, the maid was tender like her mother; she was named Sorrow, but he was called Death. Sorrow did not remain long in her rocky home. She had inherited from her mother a yearning for earth, and from her father a ceaseless unrest. So she wandered ever backwards and forwards upon the earth, and never returned to her home. The boy followed now his father, now his mother, now his sister, and he made all still and dead upon their paths; the birds grew still and dead, the ears of corn grew empty, the children pale; still and dead all who struggled and suffered.

His mother could only behold him with a shudder; he inspired his father with malicious joy, but only his sister loved him. She ever called him to her, and wept when he would not come. One day he said to Sorrow, "I must kill my mother; ay, if she only looks at me she is dead. But she ever turns aside from me."

Sorrow was terrified at these words, and did all in her power to turn the mother's gaze from the son. But she ever felt his might, and could no longer play with Love and Happiness as formerly. They both, too, feared Life's awful son even more than her grim spouse, for over him they had learnt to exert a certain power; he grew quieter in their presence. But Death remained ever inexorable; his glance now scorching like the simoom, now numbing like the north; even the Sun lost her strength before this terrible boy, for he laid night upon all eyelids, and froze all things living.

Since that time there is an end of the earth's paradise. That is why Life is no longer a

radiant maiden, but a grave woman, full of useful power, of stern demands on that which she has created. She cannot forget how fair all was once, and fain would see it thus again, notwithstanding Strife and Sorrow and Death. She would fain be stronger than all these three, and yet she must succumb and begin again anew, to succumb again, ever and ever.

SORROW.



Sorrow.



ORROW was a lovely slender child, with dark hair that framed her pale face. Her delicate lips were

nearly always closed, her black eyes looked deadly weary, so that none could behold her without weeping. The poor child had no home, and wandered restlessly from place to place. Now she entered the hut of the poor, now the palace of the rich. She was so silent and sad that all received her, but, strange to tell, all who looked at her were attacked with a great woe. One lost his only child, another his honour, his

property, a third was pursued by enemies without a cause. Again, another knew but grief from his children, so that he grew grey before his time. Or strife arose between married folk, or one of the family fell prone upon a sick bed and did not arise thence for years. People looked at one another astounded whence came so much affliction, and knew not that they themselves opened the doors to pale, silent Sorrow, and called her to their table. Sometimes the poor child came back by the same road and learnt what terrible gifts she had bestowed. Then she avoided for a long time visiting at the same houses; but she had grown to love some people, and longed to see them, and did not notice that she visited them too often. grief upon grief befell them, until the sad child took up her staff and bade them farewell with

heavy heart and streaming eyes. She went on her road quietly, not in haste, not hurriedly, and yet her step was faster than the mountain stream, faster than the west wind, so that at last she came to lodge with every human being. It was most terrible when she attached herself to children. Then the poor little things got long illnesses or even became orphans, and their pretty faces grew pale and delicate, like to Sorrow's face, and their eyes as sad and heavy. When Sorrow saw this she would weep bitterly, and for a long while would look at no child, ay, even turn her head aside when children were at play.

One day she lay beneath an apple-tree, and saw how the little apples had such merry red cheeks, that it made one quite glad to look at them. "Oh, dear apple-tree," said Sorrow, "give me such merry red cheeks, then people will like better to look at me."

"No," said the apple-tree; "if you had merry red cheeks, people would no longer harbour you from pity."

She got up sadly and pursued her road. Then she came to a garden hard by a river, in which there was such song of birds that it made one's heart leap for joy.

"Oh, you dear little birds," cried Sorrow, "give me some of your lovely song, that I may make mankind glad."

"No, dear child," twittered the birds; "if you did not come so silently and go so quietly, men would not forget you so soon, and begin to notice that you are Sorrow, and bring them grief."

And yet further roamed poor Sorrow and came to a tall wood. Its scent was delicious, and it was so pleasant to walk on the thick moss beneath the trees. Here and there sun-gleams stole through the whispering foliage, and trembled and danced upon the moss, gilding the faded leaves. It was beautiful! The child leant wearily against a tree.

"Here I may lodge and bring no grief; here I may rest, and no one look himself ill at me."

A sunbeam came leaping through the leaves, looked into the dim, lovely eyes, sprang into them, illumined them brightly, and pierced down into Sorrow's very heart. The whole wood saw the wonderful gleaming of that tender girlish face, and rustled for pleasure and admiration. Sorrow did not know that she had grown more

beautiful, but she felt the sunbeam tremble hot and joyous in her heart.

"Oh, dear wood," she cried, aloud, "give me but a single one of all your thousand sunbeams, and I shall be happy."

Of a sudden all grew deadly still in the wood; the trees looked at one another sadly, the sunbeam fled from Sorrow's eyes, touched a lustrous lizard, and then hid beneath tall ferns.

"You poor, poor child!" said an old oak;
"a single sunbeam makes you too beautiful,
men would call you too much and often, and then
they would have to bear pains far beyond their
strength. You must remain without cheer or
warmth."

Slowly a hot tear fell upon the woodruff that grew at Sorrow's feet; it sent up sweet odours and whispered thanks for this dew. But the restless maid went further, and she came to a large silent lake. Here nothing stirred, only Evening stepped across the waters, wrapped in shade, while round about him red rays darted through the lake, and here and there a star fell into it and remained unmoved on its quiet expanse. Sorrow dipped her hand into the waters and laid it on her brow. Evening came by and whispered, "Good-night; sleep dreamlessly, forget thy woe." She looked after him long, and sighed softly—

"Once I found rest in the wood; once I forgot my woe when the sunbeam was in my heart; but that is past."

Lost in dreams, the child gazed into the lake whence blew cool airs, while the nixes floated in mist across it.

Then Sorrow perceived that a red light fell

into the lake, larger, fiercer than the stars, and it continued to gleam far into the night. As she lifted her eyes, she noticed that the light came from a house beside the water. It was thickly grown with ivy, and from its high-pointed window that stood open there shone this light.

"Strange," thought Sorrow, "I have never entered here, and yet there is some one watching yonder."

She made her way to the window. There sat a stately woman with snow-white locks, wrapped in a long soft gown. A delicate kerchief was bound round her forehead. She wrote sedulously, with firm characters, in a large book. Her brow was marked with a deep stern furrow, but about her delicate nostrils and lips there were signs of tender womanliness and nobility of

heart. Sorrow stood sunk in contemplation. Then two wondrous grey eyes were uplifted and looked at her calmly, and a deep melodious voice said—

"Why do you not come in, child; I have waited for you long."

Sorrow entered amazed. She did not often hear this greeting. Of a sudden she found herself encircled by soft arms, and the wondrous woman took her on her lap, kissed her, and said—

"Dear Sorrow, you had to find me; I might not seek you, for I never come uncalled. I am Mother Patience, and I sit here and listen and watch. The lake bears to me the voices of all those who call me. Often and often have I stepped in your footprints, but alas! not ever."

The furrow in her brow deepened as she

spoke these last words. Sorrow laid her head on this motherly breast.

"Oh, go with me, ever and ever," she craved, softly.

"No, child! when you call me then I will come, and when you are weary turn in here. I have to write the Book of Life; that gives me much to do."

Poor little Sorrow remained all night with the wise mother, and next morning she went on her journey refreshed and strengthened. The whole earth was blooming and green, for it was harvest time. Sorrow looked at the poppies and the corn flowers and thought—

"You poor things! now you are blooming so merrily and gleaming in the sunshine, and yet to-day you will all be mown down."

Then she perceived a burly maiden, who

stood alone in a field, and mowed as fast as three men.

"Good morning, pale one," she called to Sorrow, in roguish tones. "Come here, and help me."

And so speaking she ran towards her, her locks flying and her blue eyes laughing like sunshine.

"But who are you?" she asked, amazed, when she saw Sorrow's dark eyes.

"I am Sorrow, and I must wander for ever. And who are you?"

"I am Work; cannot you see that? Do you not see how healthy I am, and what strong arms I have?"

And with that she took up Sorrow like an infant upon her arms, and ran with her all over the field, and laughed and shouted gleefully. A

faint tinge of red came over Sorrow's face as she said smiling—

"Come with me, do. I may never rest, and yet I am often so weary."

"That may not be, my little sister, for I must sleep in order to be fresh again in the day. But I am in all places, and must laugh, yet when I see your eyes my laughter is choked. But when you call me I will come, and remain behind whence you depart, to make the faces glad again."

Once more Sorrow stepped forth into the glittering morning and into the wide wide world. But Work and Patience kept faith and became her trusty companions. And many a time they met together of an evening in the house by the lake, and read out of the Book of Life or wrote in its pages.

THE REALM OF PEACE.



The Realm of Peace.



EACE dwelt within a deep, silent mountain tarn that was unfathomable, yet reflected, notwithstanding,

the sky's eternal blue. About it tall cliffs reared their heads, that shone at eve with rosy sheen, while beyond it was protected by a dense forest in which an axe had never sounded. Neither Sorrow nor Strife had ever come in here; even the wind could find no entry, for the rocks had pushed themselves forward so protectingly that Winter also had to rest content with shaking in lightly quite a few of his flakes,

for there were warm springs in the tarn, so Frost had no power over it. It was ever green and flowering round about the shore, and the song of birds filled the air. When Peace lay floating on the quiet surface of the tarn all the flowering and singing streamed towards him. Then he would smile blissfully, and kiss the sunbeams that darted their warm arms towards him; ay, he would encircle them and draw them under the water and play hide-and-seek with them behind the trees and leaves. He was such a glorious youth that all things loved him; they loved his blue eyes, fathomless like the lake whence he arose, his ruddy lips, his wondrous voice, his happy laughter. No wonder that the sunbeams sought him, that the moss trembled with joy when he stepped lightly across it, that the leaf trembled that touched his brow,

that the deer gazed long into the stream wherein he had seen his image, that the elves and nixes could only dream of him.

But one day a sound of weeping and sighing swept through the forest, as though the trees made plaint, and from their leaves fell drops and woke the fair sleeper whom the sunbeams had lulled to rest. Amazed, he gazed around him. A girlish figure came towards him, with pale face and long dark lashes and sad, sad eyes. She dragged her feet wearily across the moss and sank down beside him.

"Who are you?" he asked, astonished.

"I am Sorrow; Mother Patience sends me to you."

"Who is Mother Patience? and who is Sorrow? I have never heard of them."

"There is much you have not heard of, for you do not know the world."

Peace smiled. "Do you know it, then?" Sorrow sighed and nodded her head.

"Look at me," she said, "am I beautiful?"

Peace looked at her long, until he had read the whole history of the world in the depths of her solemn eyes. Sorrow felt so blissful as she gazed at him, and every hour she spent with him the poor maiden felt warmer about her heart, and love entered into it with all its power and might. When evening came Peace had read everything. He shuddered.

"No," he said, "you are not beautiful."

Sorrow felt her heart stand still. She said softly—

"Then you will not go with me?"

Peace trembled.

"Oh no," he said, "not with you. It is so lovely here."

"Yes, it is beautiful, but the wisest of women bids me tell you that your realm is too small; you are born to rule, and she has read in the Book of Life that a time will come when you shall reign over all things."

Peace looked thoughtfully down into the tarn.

"But if I am satisfied with my kingdom here?" he said. "I am not ambitious, I need no fame and no might, I have all I require."

"But if the whole world became like this holy spot, then it would be yet more beautiful, and you only need to show yourself as you are to carry off the victory and make it so."

"Do you think so?" said Peace, and he looked at her again with his lovely eyes, in whose depths dwelt rest and purity. Sorrow's heart stood still until Peace looked away from her into the water and continued thoughtfully: "I will go and see for myself whether the world wants me without having ever beheld my face. If she calls me I will come, for I will not fight with her. Farewell, Sorrow. I will test the world to see if I can found my kingdom in her."

Sorrow remained lost in wonder concerning him long after he had vanished from her gaze. A bird flew over her head towards the evening sky, flapping its wings as it went. Sorrow fell on her knees beside the tarn. The waters had grown dark, and through the forest went a sound as of sighs. The poor maid trembled like a leaf in the wind.

Here, in the realm of Peace, none understood the woe that shook her breast.

"You are not beautiful," were the words that sounded to her from all sides—out of the wood, the water, out of her own heart-beats. Night came by gently, and sought her darling whom she had ever kissed asleep. She only found Sorrow, and looked at her gloomily.

"What have you done to my Peace?" she asked, in threatening tones.

"I have fetched him away," moaned Sorrow, and wrung her hands.

Night frowned yet more darkly.

"In punishment," she said, "you shall ever seek him and never find him. Now go!"

Sorrow went forth like to a moaning wind that rushes through the trees. She wanted to seek for Peace in the world. For a long, long while she never visited Mother Patience, for she now only thought of one and had forgotten the good mother. Peace hovered over the world as a bird, and he beheld how Strife and his children had devastated it. He saw bloody

battlefields, and at sight of the first corpse he grew so giddy that he was near to fall down with awe. When he beheld murder his heart grew sore in his breast, as though he had himself been wounded, and he flew on, away from the scene.

He flew over a great city. There he saw a light burning in an attic window. He looked in. A pale man sat there, and coughed and wrote with long white fingers.

"And I, too, shall be great, ay, surely," he murmured to himself. "I feel it in my breast like fire; there is a light in my brain that shall illumine the world."

"Poor fool," thought Peace; "Ambition is hunting you to death and you do not know it."

From out a vine-wreathed window there gazed a lovely girlish head.

Peace thought—"She is like my elves," and he flew in.

But how bitterly was he disenchanted. Flowers and dresses lay about in tardy confusion, and the fair one maintained that last evening she had exceeded in charm all others at the ball. Her sister scolded at all balls; ay, said the whole world was stupid.

"I wish I was that bird who has just come in," she added.

"He, oh, he will dirty everything!" said the other, and chased him out again.

In a lonely house there sat an aged woman, and read out of a large Bible. Deadly pale her youngest son rushed into her room. He was the only one that remained to her this side the ocean, and he asked her for money; he must have money or he would shoot himself. The Bible

fell from the old woman's hand, she could not help the reprobate any more; for though he knew it not she had already sacrificed to him all her little wealth and even the very house she dwelt in.

In a beautiful garden a nobleman tended his sickly daughter who needed air and light, a very angel of patience and beauty; meanwhile her callous mother preferred the idle pleasures of the drawing-room to the care of her sick child.

In a field Peace saw a number of lads and maidens cutting corn. They laughed and sang, and threw down their sickles and seated themselves beneath an apple-tree to enjoy their midday meal and rest. Peace flew above them and settled among the branches to listen to their prattle until the lads fell asleep, while the maidens continued to chatter softly. Then a

man came across the field. He wore a broad brimmed hat, and under it loomed forth his dark, bad face. He woke the lads with kicks, he threatened the maidens with his stick, called them lazy and drove them to their work.

Again, further on he beheld a lovely girl given to wife to a rich monster, notwithstanding her pleadings and prayers. He saw sisters and brothers haggling over the coffin of a father; even among little children he witnessed strifes that showed him that they bore within them the seeds of future passions.

Peace flew towards the south, where lovely girls swung carelessly in hammocks, rocking themselves and torturing their slaves. He flew to the north, and beheld a large city full of light-minded women and unfaithful men, who rushed from one amusement to another—now

on the ice, now in the ball-room, now in sledges, now on or behind the stage. He flew to the far west, and beheld a rushing and racing after gain-restless, endless. He flew to the east, and saw noble men and women working in exile like to day-labourers, heavy at heart with cold and home-sickness. He flew into the desert, and saw lonely travellers languishing for water. He flew all over and around the world, but everywhere he beheld the signs of pain and struggle. So he went back to his mountain tarn, and he resolved never to leave his little realm again. How amazed was he to behold on its shores a great monastery, built of huge solid stones, that made it appear as though it had stood there for ages.

"I must have been long absent," thought Peace, as he entered into the convent.

He stepped inside a wide stone cell, whose tall pointed windows looked out upon his lake and on the rosy shimmering cliffs beyond. A young monk sat by an organ, playing and singing in heart-moving tones, as if he would communicate to the walls the storm that shook his soul. An older monk had risen from a table, on which, as also on the floor, lay strewn open folios. He seated himself in the window-niche and covered his face with his hands. Of a sudden the door was opened, and there entered an emaciated monk with flaming eyes. His fierce regard rested sternly on the younger man. Then he turned his haggard form towards the man in the window-niche, and pointing to the door he said-

"For you, my son, these sounds are noxious poison, which only strict penance can remedy." The man addressed bowed his head and went out.

"And you, my son, sin daily by your song. Your life becomes enjoyment in lieu of penitence, and you lead astray your brethren also. From to-day forward song and organ are forbidden you."

And he walked to the instrument, locked it, and, putting the key in his pocket, he went away. The younger man fell upon his knees before the organ and kissed it like a dead bride, and then went out into the church.

Peace leant against a beech-tree and wept passionately. "The whole world is a struggle, and they have taken from me my only home. Farewell, my silent lake!"

And once more he went out into the world. He came past a churchyard and went in, going from grave to grave till he came to the chapel, where a woman knelt and sobbed.

"Not even here," said Peace, and turned to go further.

Then he saw a neglected grave, all overgrown with trailing ivy. Cross and inscription had long vanished, the mound had sunk, only the ivy wound its arms lovingly over the forgotten spot.

"Here is my kingdom," said Peace, and he sank down among the leaves.

But Sorrow yet roams the world in search of Peace, for she can never forget him. Yet, wherever she asked, wherever she sought, nowhere could she find him. Some had seen him go by, but none had been able to hold him. She passed through the churchyard, and stepped by the new graves, only the neglected one she did not visit.

EARTHLY POWERS.



Earthly Powers.

HERE is Truth? I want to go to her," said Strife.

"She lives in a castle of rock crystal, high up above, on the highest mountain in the world, and looks out thence on all the lands, and knows everything, and whosoever attains thither finds everlasting rest; but I do not know the road."

So spoke a golden eagle, flapped his wings, and disappeared into immeasurable heights.

But straight in front of Strife there stood of a sudden a little being, with turned-up nose, large, light, prominent eyes that only looked outwards, and a half-opened mouth, as though she had just spoken.

- "Whence come you?" said Strife.
- "I don't know."
- "Whither are you going?"
- "I don't know either."
- "What do you want in the world?"
- "I want to know, for my name is Query."
- "Oh, you want to know? Then perhaps you know the road to Truth."
- "Yes, I know it, and that is why I do not go on it, for I want to see that which I do not know."
 - "But Truth knows all."
- "Oh no; how can she know? She sits up there in her castle, while I run about and ask and ask."

And she skipped about restlessly as she spoke. Seeing a flower, she stooped down and asked—

"Why do you grow here?"

"Bah," cried Strife, impatiently, and trod it down. "What do I care about that! You are to show me the road to Truth."

"That I will not," cried Query, and ran away. With two long strides Strife caught her up, and seized her by the arm.

"I don't leave go of you till you have led me thither."

"But I don't know the whole way; I can only lead you as far as Doubt."

"Then lead me to Doubt."

"I will not," said Query, defiantly, and tugged at the arm that was captive.

Strife grew enraged. He tore up stinging nettles, and lashed her with them until she promised to do all that he desired. Then he slung his golden chain round her body, and said—

"Now lead me and I will follow."

Then she began to lead him astray, on rough paths, through shrubs and water, and over rocks, and across the desert. At last she stood still and laughed at him scornfully, pointing out with a titter the spot whence they had set forth. At this Strife grew so furious that even impertinent little Query began to tremble. And she had reason to tremble, for he chained her to the nearest tree and lashed at her with cords until she could cry no more.

"Now," he said, "explain to me how to reach as far as Doubt, for I will no longer go with you. But if you deceive me again I will strike you dead,"

She pointed out the road to him, and he went away without looking back, leaving her tied to the tree. She begged and entreated and cried for help in vain. His mighty form grew smaller and smaller, the sun scorched her hotter and hotter. Poor little Query nearly perished. But the inquisitive swallows, who were her especial friends, saw her need, and brought her drops of water and crumbs of bread in their beaks. This lasted until autumn came, and they set forth on In her need she turned to their wanderings. the wind for aid. He began to blow stronger and stronger, till he had broken down the tree. Had little Query not been so lithe and supple, it would have cost her her life. As it was, she fell to the ground numb with fear and cold. But she soon roused herself, loosed herself free from the stump, and ran off as fast as her feet could

bear her, to peer once more with curious eyes into the world.

Strife had reached Doubt, who lived at the foot of the mountain where stood the castle of Truth. His house was surrounded by a large bog, into which countless persons had sunk who had sought the road to Truth. Strife hewed down a whole forest and threw it into the bog, and then stepped across it to the dwelling of Doubt.

"Hold!" cried Doubt. "You don't escape from here without a struggle."

"That just suits me. I came here to wrestle with you."

So they began to tussle, and they fought together for the space of a whole year. Winter came; they strove upon the ice. Summer came; they still contended. The wood that Strife had thrown into the bog began to sink under the mighty bodies, and it sank deeper and deeper until it threatened to engulf them. Then, at last, Doubt gave way, and said—

"Well go, but it will not be for your happiness."

"I do not seek happiness; I seek Truth," said Strife, and began to climb the mountain. The longer he ascended the higher it seemed to grow; with immense exertion he climbed from rock to rock. Beneath him a precipice yawned continually, and threatened to destroy him. More than once he had to lay hold of the stones and pull himself up by them. A block broke and fell thundering into the deeps. From time to time it lightened and flashed up in the heights; that must be the palace of crystal which Strife had vowed to enter. After new exertions he reached

a wondrous lovely forest dell, surrounded by tall, aspiring trees. Within was such scent of flowers, such murmur of water, such song of birds, that a strange sensation came over him, while straight in front, upon a polished rocky peak, something shone like to the sun itself. That was the castle of rock crystal. Its thousand facets caught the light and sunbeams, and reflected them up and down in endless refractions. The pointed turrets reared themselves against the clear ether. like ice upon which snow has never fallen. It was as though light moved about in it of its own will and power, as though it came forth thence, and not from the Sun that stood behind the castle. When Strife shielded his eyes with his hand in order to endure the glare, a lovely maiden, clothed only in her own golden locks, came forth from the castle and down the hill.

She had laid a huge green leaf across her shoulders to shelter her from the sun, and was thus flooded with gold-green light. In her hand she held a pitcher cut from a single topaz. In it the wood, the flowers, and her own graceful image were reflected. Strife watched her as she placed her small white feet upon the moss, walking so lightly that she left no trace. She had cast down her eyes as she neared the spring. Then Strife came close, and said as gently as he could—

"Give me to drink. I am thirsty."

She lifted her eyes with astonishment and looked at the strong, dark man. To him it seemed as though heaven looked at him, so deep blue, so clear and pure were her eyes. The long weary road, the fierce struggles, ay, even the goal that he would reach, vanished

from his memory as he looked at this impressive beauty.

"Are you Truth?" he asked, at last. "If so I will worship you."

The rosy child-mouth opened.

"No, Truth is my mother; I am called Innocence. Do you wish to go to her?"

"Yes—no, no longer; I will stay with you, for you are more beautiful than all."

"Am I beautiful?" asked the girl with surprise; "my mother has never told me that. But you, you are beautiful, and you look so good, therefore you shall drink out of my pitcher."

When he had drunk the draught he was quite beside himself. He had only one thought, to win charming Innocence unto himself.

"Come, play with me, thou heavenly child," he said; "I can teach you quite new games, here, on this fair meadow." And he made balls out of flowers and threw them at her, and watched her movements as she caught them laughing and shouting gleefully. Then he made her run and he ran after. Then he blindfolded his eyes with leaves, and she teazed him till he caught her. At last she grew so wanton that she bound him round with creepers, upon which he made as though he could not stand, and let himself fall into the grass. She laughed merrily, and strewed him with flowers and leaves; but when she had nearly covered him, he shook himself free, sprang up, raised her high into the air, and ran with her to the wood.

"Mother, mother!" called the terrified maiden.

Then the sun sank and night covered all things.

Truth sat in her crystal castle and waited for

her daughter. She wondered where the sweet child could have strayed, and tried to behold her as she saw all things. But fear for her own flesh and blood troubled her vision. She passed her hand before her eyes several times, but she clearly beheld the sun set and the moon rise so she could not be blind. When the moon shone down on her castle, she heard quite distinctly her child's voice crying in terror, "Mother, my mother!" and the next moment, with a fearful crash, the castle of crystal was rent in twain from top to bottom. Truth grew yet paler than the moon that was shining into her face. She rushed down the mountain. The stream sparkled in the moonlight, and there lay the topaz pitcher and a smell of crushed flowers filled the air. The mourning mother stood still and asked of night where was her child, and all the

flowers began to weep and drooped their heads in sorrow, and soon the whole meadow was wet with their tears.

Truth went onward, petrified, following the traces of her child deep into the wood, where the moon played with the shadows and conjured forth all sorts of shapes. She went on and on, till at last she heard a sound of weeping, and the next moment she stood before her daughter, who lay on her knees and stretched out her arms towards her. No one spoke a word, even Night held her breath; but the eyes of Truth began to glow like flames of fire. With one look she burnt her daughter's hair, with the next she dazzled Strife, who stood entranced and could only stare at her. He felt the pain of it shoot through all his body, he put his hand up to his eyes, he tottered and fell against a tree

He wanted to see; he knew that Innocence was kneeling there in the moonlight, but he was stone blind; no ray of light was ever again to illuminate his darkness. At last Truth spoke with deep resounding voice—

"My child, you are torn from me for ever. Up here there is no longer room for you. Oh why did you not obey? I had warned you against every stranger; you were to speak to none, to give no answers. Here, take my cloak; at the foot of the mountain you will find shelter."

With these words she turned and went away, and her sighs bent the crowns of the trees, and grew to a great storm that raged through the world like an everlasting plaint. Strife stormed down the mountain and howled with pain and despair. Since that time he has grown yet

more violent, for he is blind, and rushes through the world senselessly, trying to wreak vengeance on it for his eternal pain. Poor Innocence wrapped the cloak round her trembling limbs, and descended slowly into the valley. Her feet were scratched by the rough stones, and her tears flowed ceaselessly. A few hours ago and she had been the most lovely flower on the heights, and now she was crushed and trodden down. She came to the haunts of men, and knocked at their doors and asked for alms, but she got more abuse than alms. At last she came to the spot where Doubt dwelt, and one stormy night she passed with light foot over the bog, not knowing that death yawned under her feet. Doubt was amazed when he heard a tap at his door. Who could have crossed the bog on such a night! There stood a pale tired

woman, and begged for shelter, and said she would not stay long.

"Who are you?" asked Doubt.

"I am called Innocence."

Doubt laughed a hard short laugh.

"You will not make me believe that."

But as his words made her cry he grew very sombre.

"Is it Strife that has brought you to this? Oh shame, oh everlasting shame! A curse on him and his search for Truth. It were better he had been drowned here."

And Doubt received Innocence most kindly and kept her beside him, but he could give her no comfort. Each of his words only made her heart heavier, until at last he told her that she would be a mother.

"Then I shall die," said Innocence.

At the moment her child was born it glided away like a snake, and hopped and danced like a will-o'-the-wisp across the bog of Doubt.

"Oh, my child," sighed Innocence, "come to me, only once."

Then she felt a burning and glowing at her breasts and a sucking that drained her very life. And while the little being sucked it gained charming form, and it had eyes that shone now black, now green. Innocence felt how it was draining from her all her heart's blood, and with a soft sigh she inclined her lovely head in death. Doubt buried her in the silent bog that covered her with its dark waters. Then he looked at the child.

"Shall I murder you, you horrid wretch? No; the world is ripe for you, you shall live; go forth and avenge your mother!" And so saying he threw her into the bog, across which she slid like an eel, and hopped out into the world to do as much mischief in it as possible.

Strife was her special butt; she tempted and teazed and provoked him incessantly, and often sent him into towering rages. Then he tried to wring her neck, for he knew not that she was his daughter. But she always escaped, laughing, from the blind man, and mocked him.

The world was enchanted with her. It lay at her feet and adored her as a goddess; and this goddess was Falsehood.

THE INEXORABLE.



The Inexorable.



HE sea was running high and was black as night. Only the crests of the endless waves glistened in the

lightning that flashed across the heavens. The storm was raging towards the land and threw the ships upon the rocks, so that hundreds of human lives perished in the ocean. Then of a sudden it seemed as though the storm grew entangled among the cliffs on the shore, and condensed into a form that reared up tall and pale against the mighty heavens. It was a grave youth with unflinching black eyes, who

leaned upon a sickle and held an hour-glass in his hand. He gazed across the waters with an indifferent air, as though the wrecks, and corpses beneath, concerned him as little as the sand in his glass, which trickled down evenly, steadily, regardless of the blustering of the storm, or the sudden quiet. There was something iron-like in the youth's features, in his eyes there lay a power that destroyed all things they looked upon; even the ocean seemed to be numbed by them, and to grow silent with fear. Day dawned, and flooded with roseate hues from the rising sun, Sorrow came stepping over the cliffs. She stretched out her arms to the youth.

"Brother," she cried, "brother, what have you done! You have raged terribly, and did not hear how I called you, ay, cried for you so eagerly."

"I heard nothing," said Death. "I felt my-

self too quiet, so I roused myself. A few vessels were lost in the act."

"O pitiless one!" said Sorrow.

"I do not comprehend your grief," answered the sombre youth; and turning from her, he walked away. He paced silently through the sunny world; it blew chill around him, and wherever he paused a silent shudder seized all things. He went by a house and looked in. There lay a man tortured with pain who beheld him and called him imploringly; but he only shook his head and went farther. A lovely young woman stood in her garden surrounded by joyous children, her husband had just stepped up to her and kissed her. The pale wanderer laid his hand on her shoulder and beckoned to her; she followed him a few steps and sank lifeless to the ground.

Then he came to a forest in which a pale man was pacing hither and thither, tearing his hair and gnashing his teeth, crying—

"Dishonoured, dishonoured!"

He saw the passer-by with the sombre eyes, saw him lift his white hand and point to a tree. The despairing man understood the signal.

He passed a group of playing children, and softly moved the grass between their feet with his scythe. Then they bowed their heads like broken flowerets.

There an old man sat in an armchair, and was enjoying the warming sunbeams. Death raised his hour-glass and held it before his eyes—the last sands were running down.

He halted by a stagnant pool. No water could be seen, for it was covered with green. The rushes quivered under his cold breath, and the toad that had been croaking grew silent. Then the reeds rustled and a lovely woman drew close to the water, took something from a handkerchief and threw it down. It sank with a faint gurgle into the depths. Twice she made a movement as though she would spring in after it, but each time Death extended his scythe towards her, and she fled terrified. He lifted his hour-glass in which the sand ran down quickly, hurriedly. Then something white came up between the green water-plants, and with wide-open eyes a little corpse appeared, gazing at the running sand.

Then Death went further, and across a battlefield, where he mowed down many fine men.

At last he came to a lovely valley in which autumn was reigning in all its glory. The trees were pathed in gleaming gold, the sward beneath was a luscious green, strewn with tender flowers. A silvery laugh came from the branches through which a charming little figure was floating, now hiding among the leaves, now jumping down upon the grass, and at last running with light-some step, and garments streaming in the breeze, to meet a stately man who stood leaning on a club beside a hillock.

"You must go with me. You are mine, for I am Courage."

"Must I?" said the sweet little form, and turned her back to him.

As she did so her eyes, full of beaming wantonness and measureless roguery, turned towards the pale pilgrim. He saw the dimples that played on her chin and cheeks, her neck and her arm. Her whole slender figure was enwrapt by her light floating locks, which were moved by the softest breeze, and which looked in the sunshine like falling gold-dust.

"Yes," cried Courage, "you must, for you love me. I have found that out."

"I love you in this fair valley, and that is why I give you smiles; but if you must go out into the world, you must go alone. There stands one who has never yet spoken with me, and he looks as if he too needed the gift of smiling."

"You can't give it to him," said Courage.

"Do not try. You will only hurt yourself with his scythe."

But Happiness had already run up to the Inexorable.

"Shall I teach you how to smile, you serious youth? You seem to need it."

"Yes, I could use it, for all behold me unwillingly, and no one goes with me unless he is obliged, and it is because I cannot smile."

"Yes," said Happiness, and she grew quite timid; "but in order to teach you smiling, I must kiss you. That does not seem to me so hard, only your eyes terrify me."

"Then I will close them," said Death.

"No, no, you are so pale, I shall be still more afraid; and your scythe, too, is so sharp and cold."

"Then I will throw it from me."

And he threw his scythe far away; it grazed the trees as it fell. Then their golden foliage fell to earth, and all the branches grew bare, and as the scythe sank into the grass it grew covered with rime, and the flowers hung down their crowns. "Oh, you have spoilt my garden with your ugly scythe," cried Happiness; "and I was going to make you such a lovely present."

"I did not want to do it, but the scythe flew out of my hand, and now I am much sadder because I have grieved you. You can find new gardens, but no one can teach me how to smile."

"You shall learn, notwithstanding," said the fair maiden, and she stepped close to him; but as often as her rosy lips approached him she grew so cold that she fell back shuddering. Then he looked at her imploringly without raising his hand, as if he feared to hurt her by a touch; but his gaze held her spellbound like a great power, and she had to kiss him. But at the moment that her lips touched him his cold sank deep into her heart, and she fell dead to the earth. Courage sprang angrily at the pale youth

- "You have murdered my Happiness."
- "Was she yours?" asked Death, and sighed; "then go after her; there she floats."

Following the indication of his hand, Courage saw how the soft breezes were tenderly bearing away Happiness upon their wings, like to a light cloudlet. Courage hurried after them with powerful steps, keeping his eyes ever fixed on that rosy cloud.

Death stood and gazed until he felt quite warm within, and a tear ran slowly down his pale cheeks. He had to learn for himself, what as yet he knew not, how it hurts if we chase away Happiness.

When nothing more could be seen but bare trees, faded grass, and withered flowers, he lifted his scythe and looked sadly around the valley, as though he expected it would all bloom again. But the earth remained dead and stark, so he turned once more to the sea. That was rolling its eternal tides upwards and downwards, as indifferent as ever. But he who stood above and looked down was no longer indifferent. He thought of the maiden whom he had hurt, and his yearning was as great as the ocean at his feet. And this yearning transfigured him to wondrous beauty. Thus he was seen of a pale maiden with unkempt hair and torn garments. She fell at his feet; but he was terrified by her, and drew back a pace.

"Do you no longer know me?" said the maiden. "You used to know me well, and you knew that I perished for yearning after you. I am Despair. Have you forgotten that you promised to kiss me, to give me one single kiss. It would be happiness for ever."

The youth's eyes grew dark as night, and his voice sounded stern as he said—

"And you dare to speak of happiness? Do you know what happiness is? If you come near it only once may you be turned to stone!"

"And if I were to turn to stone, yet I implore for a kiss from your mouth."

The youth shuddered and thought of the lips that had touched his and taught him to smile, and as he thought of them he smiled. When the maiden at his feet saw this, she threw her arms about his neck, and laid her head on his breast. She did not see the hate and loathing that flashed from his eyes, but the next moment a hideous skeleton grinned at her, and nearly crushed her in his bony arms, and a death's-head kissed her.

Then the earth trembled and opened. Cities

vanished, fire streamed forth from mountains, forests were uprooted, rocks flew through the air, the sky was on fire, and the sea rolled in upon the land. When all was still again, Despair reared above the waters, an image of stone. Death rushed away as a storm wind to pursue the rosy cloud under this disguise.

WILLI.



Willi.

OTHER PATIENCE was once again sitting by her window writing. She had often been called that day, and

had much to confide to her mighty folios, much too that was good and pleasant; that is why an air of cheerful calm rested on her features. The whole room was filled with the scent of lovely flowers, and on the hearth there burnt a bright fire that threw magic lights and shades upon the industrious scribe. Without it was blowing cold, and like sharp needle-points the frozen snow flew against the window panes. A light covering of

ice lay over the lake, firm enough to hold the ravens. The distant road resounded hard and dry under the quick steps of shivering wanderers, the wind sang melancholy tunes round the lonely little house, as though he would recount to Mother Patience all the misery of the earth. He shook and tussled at the ivy that tenderly enwrapt the house. Suddenly she stopped to listen; a light, well-known footstep had passed her window, and the next moment Sorrow knelt at her feet, breathless, trembling like a hunted deer.

"Mother," she said, "mother, how terrible. Why were you not there, then that awful woman would not have gone with me, and it all would not have happened."

So speaking Sorrow looked behind her fearfully, as though that pursued her that had alarmed her so. "Calm yourself, child, no awful people come hither. Tell me what has occurred."

"It was my fault," wailed Sorrow; "I did it. Oh, why am I in the world? why am I not there, deep down in the lake where the frozen water would bury me safely?"

"Be quiet, child, quiet; do not murmur, do not complain, for you bow down the haughty and soften the hardhearted."

"No, mother, that is just it; I harden the hearts, and those who love know each other no more. You must hear my tale."

"Two years ago I turned in on a prosperous farm; it was called The Holt. Wherever you looked you saw evidences of full rich life. The cattle were well fed and tended like horses, the barns were full, the maids and men in noisy activity. A splendid boy with blue eyes

and brown locks was cracking his whip in the yard. He wanted to chase the calves that were going to drink. A slender pretty girl with laughing brown eyes and a coronet of fair plaits came out upon the doorstep.

"'Johnnie, Johnnie!' she cried; 'you rogue, you naughty boy; will you leave the calves alone.'

"The boy laughed and cracked his whip louder than ever, but swift as lightning the girl ran out, and with a curious stern look about her mouth wrenched the whip from him before he was aware of it, and held it high in the air so that he could not reach it, though he jumped and tried. It was a charming picture,—the boy impetuously defiant, the girl so firm and lithe. I looked at both with pleasure. But there was another looking at them, he seemed to be the bailiff. When the girl looked round

she grew quite red at the gaze that rested on her, and called out—

- "'Why do you stand like that? Could you not hinder him?"
- "'Oh, yes; but then Willi would not have flown out like a little demon. I only waited to see her come out and make her stern face.'
- "'Get along with you,' she said, and threatened him with the whip.
- "The bell rang for supper. I was called in and allowed to sit among the maids. There stood the Holt farmer, stately and strong. He had just such brown eyes as his daughter, and the same stern look about the mouth, only in him it was more marked. His wife had blue eyes like the boy, but her air was depressed, as if she could not hold herself against the strong wills around her.

- "'Johnnie, say grace,' said the farmer.
- "Johnnie was cross and mumbled-
- "'Come, Lord Jesus, sit down among us, and give me back my whip.'
- "'But, Johnnie!' thundered the voice of the farmer, who tried thus to overpower the tittering that went round the table.
- "The tone was a merry one. Johnnie was much teazed, and he swallowed down his vexation with his hot soup. The bailiff sat opposite to Willi, and they often exchanged secret glances.
- "'Johnnie is my crown prince,' said the farmer; 'and he will once reign over all this domain, while Willi will have all the money and wed the Raven farmer.'
- "'That I will not,' said the girl, without looking up from her plate, and again that stern look came into her face; 'I do not like that man.'

- "'She does not want to be a raven mother,' the head-maid whispered to the bailiff, and all began to laugh.
- "'What is all this whispering?' asked the farmer, frowning darkly.
- "No one would reply. At last Johnnie called out—
 - "'Willi does not want to be a raven mother.'
- "Then the laughter knew no bounds. Willi threw a censuring look at her brother; the farmer said drily—
- "'I do not like these silly jokes, and if I say a thing it must be.'
- "Willi was silent, but under her fair plaits the same resolve remained.
 - "Now hear the terrible part. In the same night

¹ A German idiom. A "raven mother" means a bad, unnatural mother.

that I slept there Johnnie got ill with fever. The doctor was sent for in haste; the whole house was upset, and before I could leave the village that I was leisurely pacing, little Johnnie grew pale and still, the whole farm silent as the grave, and only the sobs of women were heard through the open window as they laid the boy in his coffin. The farmer's wife was quite broken down, she wept and moaned incessantly; the farmer bit his teeth together in wild grief. Willidid her work, but often passed her hands acrossher eyes; only whenever the bailiff would comenear her, she turned her back and went away.

"It was long since I went that road again; I could not look at the poor things. Only now have I passed once more. I wanted so much to know what the people were doing, and whether Willi had married the Raven farmer to comfort:

her father, since his pride, his darling, his crown prince lay in the grave. Oh, mother, mother, had I not brought them misfortune enough! There they stood, all three, upon the threshold, and the north wind howled around them. The old woman was holding her apron before her eyes; the father was angry like a wild bull. He shook Willi and turned her adrift with the words—

"'Away from my house, wench; I know you not.'

"Willi's face was pale as death, but unmoved. No sound crossed her lips, no prayers, no complaint. The door of her home fell sounding into its lock, and Willi, wrapped in a shawl, stood outside in the north wind. But under her shawl something moved, which she shielded tenderly, and that soon began to ery for its mother's breast. Then her face grew rather softer, and

she looked anxiously at the little creature with whom she was thus left alone this wintry night—she, the daughter of the rich farmer of The Holt. She did not seem strong on her feet and had often to stop by the roadside, now to rest, now to quiet the child. Thus she went on all night along the high road till she reached a strange village. There she sought shelter from the wind under a porch, seated herself on the stone steps and fell asleep. But scarcely had day dawned before she was chased away by the maid who had come to sweep, and who threw hard words at her. The wind had abated a little, but she was so numbed that she tottered on her feet.

"After a while she managed to walk again, and thus she passed through the whole large village, over the hard frozen ground, under the grey leaden sky that grew darker, more glowering as the day advanced. The child would no longer be quieted, and cried often and long. So poor Willi went from house to house and begged for work.

"'We want no maid with a child,' was the hard reply she received everywhere, or 'What can we do with the little screamer?'

"Then she begged for a little milk for the babe, for her own was diminishing from hour to hour. But no one would give her any, and she wandered on. I went after her, for I could no longer lose hold of her. Suddenly I saw some one come up behind me—a terrible woman, with stony face and wild hair. She came nearer, ever nearer, and as she was close upon me she laughed hoarsely—

"'You have done your work well. It is my turn now, for I am Despair.'

"The wind was howling anew, and a snowstorm began that even took away my breath. Willi thought she had walked away, but in the dead of the night she found herself once more at the entrance of the same village. She seated herself in a hedge half dead with cold and hunger. The babe in her arms whimpered unceasingly, only from time to time it cried aloud. In the morning she roused herself with an effort, and once more begged for a drop of milk at various doors. She was scolded anew. Once a boy gave her a piece of bread, she could not eat it. She tried twice, three times, toswallow the hard, cold pieces. Then the child whined again. She shook her head and threw the bread into the snow. Slowly she dragged herself onwards, till she came near the river, already covered with a thin crust of ice, on

which lay the fresh fallen snow. The wind had lulled, but the sky was still leaden grey and a new snowstorm threatened. The fearful woman stepped past me towards Willi, who now stood on the bridge staring down abstractedly. She laid her hand upon her shoulder. Willi turned her head slowly; but when she saw the stony eyes she shrieked and the child fell out of her arms. I heard the ice crack and crackle, and then there was nothing more. Willi lay on the ground unconscious, and people who were just passing the bridge peeped down, shook their heads and raised her up. I do not know where they took her, beautiful Willi with her wild shock of fair hair and her bright brown eyes. Oh, mother, what have I done! Can you not help?"

"Not yet," said Patience, and looked dream-

ingly in front of her, "but I shall help when it is time."

Winter was past, the world began to stir anew, the tomtits and blackbirds twittered, in the fields there was merry life, when Willi stood before her judges accused of infanticide. She was white as a sheet, her eyes gleamed unnaturally from out of dark hollows, and to all questions she only replied by a shake of the head. Brow and lips had a strange expression. Was it the reflection of that terrible face that had stared at her on the bridge, or of the thoughts with which she had wrestled in prison?

In the whole assembly there reigned breathless silence and strained expectation. The judge's voice grew momentarily sharper, more incisive.

"Do you not know, then, that your life is in

danger if you give no answer?" was sounding from his lips, when there arose a commotion in the assembly.

All turned towards the door, by which entered the Holt farmer. He was bowed down, his hair was white and there were deep furrows in his face. When Willi saw him her hand clutched into a fist, which she raised threateningly. Of a sudden she let it sink. She knew not what came to her, but something soft laid itself round her heart that seemed to melt its ice. Invisible to all, behind the farmer, some one else had stepped into court; it was Mother Patience. She saw with a glance that things were not well for Willi. Like a soft, tender air of spring, she passed by all assembled, touched Willi's hard brow, whispered some words to her counsel, began to dictate questions to the

judge, and stretched out her hand to support the farmer.

The whole aspect of the room was changed. Even the pale youth Death, who stood behind Willi and waited for her, retired a few steps. It would seem as if this time she would escape him.

"Tell me, my child," said the judge, quite gently, "were you long on the high roads?"

Willi answered firmly-

"I no longer know."

"Were you out at night?"

"Yes; I was out at night—two nights, I think, in a snowstorm."

"Did you ask none for alms?"

Willi gnashed her teeth.

"I went from house to house, and begged for milk for the—for the—fainting child; but none, none gave me aught. They scolded me, and called me bad names, but gave me not one drop."

A murmur ran through the assemblage. People from the village were called in who stated that a person had begged from them for two days, and had then disappeared.

"She wandered in the snowstorm with a newborn babe," said the judge, sternly; "and you gave her nothing?"

"We thought she was a bad woman," answered the people.

The judge shrugged his shoulders.

"And then you came to a bridge, and leant against it to look into the water. What happened after?"

Willi shuddered.

"I looked down, and wanted to jump in, but

I was so frozen I could not lift my feet, and then—then, some one touched me, and when I turned round I saw a terrible woman, with a face of stone, with wild hair, and then—then I heard the ice crack below me, and then I knew nothing more."

The Holt farmer groaned aloud; the listeners looked at one another; the counsel began to speak with great eloquence, and bandied the word "Hallucination."

Willi listened amazed.

"So that is the name of that terrible woman," she thought.

Once she gazed at her father. He looked so broken that her eyes grew moist and damp, and a tear rolled slowly down her emaciated face and fell upon her hand. She did not perceive that silent, pale Death retreated from her, as little as she had felt his proximity. She only looked with weary eyes towards the door that closed behind the jury. What to her were Life and Death? But another tear rolled forth as she looked at her father, who also gazed at the closed door, as if there would issue thence a thunderbolt that could kill him. At last, at last, the men came out and spoke solemnly and earnestly—

" Not guilty."

Impossible to describe the commotion in the court. No one was calm save Willi, who leaned stunned against the wall, and only opened her eyes when she felt her head resting against a beating heart, and two arms flung around her neck, as they had often been flung when she was a small, weak child. The Holt farmer whispered softly into the ear of his rescued

child, words that sank into her heart, as though no curious crowd surrounded her. When at last she found words she stammered with dry lips—

"Mother, where is mother?"

Then there flashed a look like sheet lightning across the old man's face.

"Mother is ill, very, very ill; perhaps we shall no longer find her."

"Oh, come, father; quick, let us go," said Willi, and she drew him away so eagerly the old man could hardly follow.

On the threshold of the farm they stood still a second; Willi laid her hand on her heart, but it would not be calmed.

"Father," she whispered, "father, I am afraid."

"I, too," he said softly, from his inmost soul.

Willi re-entered her home trembling, trembling she stood in the dear old room. There lay her mother, deadly still, pale as marble; but Mother Patience had kissed her at the last, and that was why her white mouth smiled. Willi knelt by the bed, and her whole body shook with suppressed sobs.

The farmer stood leaning on his stick in the doorway; the tears ran down his face. He knew it, he had himself closed those eyes that had at last ceased from weeping. Then he went out, he could look no longer.

Sorrow was in the room; she laid her arm round Willi and murmured—

" My sister!"

Mother Patience was there too. She stroked Willi's locks and poured peace into her weary soul, so that at last she could bear to look at her dead mother, ay, could even touch the cold hands with her lips. Then Patience pointed the way to her father outside, to whom she remained as sole comfort and support. Ay, Willi was a strong soul. She began a hard, weary life with a broken heart and a weakened body. She had often need to call upon Mother Patience, when her strength was at an end, and her father, old and crabbed, demanded too much from her; when the farm-servants obeyed her reluctantly and morosely; when the villagers avoided her at the church door.

She became a mother to the poor, and quietly did more good than all the villagers together. Yet all were somewhat in awe of the grave, stern woman, who was never hard or angry, but never cheerful. She will not marry, least of all the man who brought her to shame and deserted

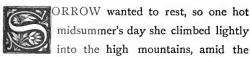
her in her need; her property she will leave to the orphaned.

Yes, yes, Mother Patience, you can work miracles.

THE HERMIT.



The Hermit.



ancient forests, high, high up, into the region of quiet, solemn solitude. Only here and there a streamlet trickled, or a dry branch that lay upon the thick moss broke under her footsteps. From time to time the leaves swayed, as though the trees breathed; then a sunbeam would creep through and slide across the fallen mossy giant trunks upon which younger life was disporting; little firs and beeches, strawberries and ants in

dense confusion. Of a sudden there was an opening, and Sorrow found herself stepping upon a narrow path, beneath towering rocks, at her feet a yawning precipice. After a while the space grew a little wider, and she came to a tiny house attached to the rock like to an eagle's eyrie. Beside it, in a niche cut in the living rock, sat a man with long white beard, leaning on his stick, and staring with sombre dark eyes down into the valleys that opened out from all sides.

As far as the eye could reach there was only mountain and forest. Two eagles hovered almost immovable in the trembling summer air, and then flew after each other in slow circles.

"I am weary," said Sorrow, and seated herself in the thyme at the feet of the hermit, who looked at her slowly from top to toe. "Is that all that you bring?" he asked, grimly. "You had promised you would sometime bring me Rest, but I see no one."

"I think she is coming after me," said Sorrow, dreamily; "the forest is getting so quiet; but I will not let her come if you do not keep your promise to me and tell me your history."

Once again a sombre look from out those black eyes was fixed on Sorrow; then they looked nervously, searchingly out into the wood; then the white beard trembled a little, and dull muffled tones issued from the man's chest.

"The price is heavy, but Rest is sweet. In my youth I was poor and never looked at the girls, for I did not want to create misery about me, and I knew hunger and thirst too well to ask them of my own accord to dwell in my hut. I was strong as a lion, and industrious,

so I slowly earned a good piece of bread and a house that I had almost built by myself. Then it occurred to me that, as youth was nearly past, I must make haste if I wanted to marry. I knew a lovely girl, with eyes like a deer, whom a youth in the village had long desired, but she had refused him several times, until at last he saw that she would have nothing to say to him. Then he had a mind to drown, but he thought better of it and went to foreign parts, and nothing more was heard of him. The same day I wooed Marie, and nearly fainted for joy when, in answer to my timid question, 'If I am not too old for you, I should like to have you to wife, will you be mine?' she answered with glad eyes, quite softly, 'Most willingly.' I believe that if one begins to love young, one does not know what such happiness means. But if one

has been alone for years, and then comes home and there by the hearth stands a young, beautiful woman who laughs at one roguishly, it makes one hot about the heart and head, and one takes up one's happiness in one's arms and runs about with it like one demented. You even cavil with the wind if it blows on your wife, and you hardly like to suffer the sun to shine on her. Yes, I was quite beside myself with love and happiness; and when next year she presented me with a son, I really had to tear myself away to go to my work. And the child had just such eyes as hers, so beaming and merry. Soon it could stretch out its little hands and pull my beard, and then we laughed. Six years passed thus happily; every day the boy grew more beautiful and clever, and my Marie remained merry and young in our little house by the mountain. True I was passionate sometimes, but then she would always send me our boy and I grew quiet at once, for no one could look into his eyes and be angry, so angelic was that face with its golden curls.

"One day the rejected wooer returned to the village; we saw him as we went to church, and it gave me a pang to see that Marie grew pale and red and could not cease from looking at him. It is true that she laughed at me for this, and said that she was quite proud that I could even be jealous of the past.

"But I could not forget his look, and why had she grown red? All the villagers had noticed it and smiled, and as it was the younger men were jealous of me. Nor was there an end with this first meeting. He insisted on his old acquaintanceship and visited us often, and as he had nothing to do, he sometimes came when my wife was alone at home. I began to be vexed at this, especially since a horrid old woman, with a fair young girl, that was as like you as pea to pea, turned in at our house one day and warmed themselves by our fire. She let all sorts of words fall, about evil tongues, about an old man and a young wife and an ancient lover, and while she jabbered the girl looked at me piteously, like you look now-I can never forget that look. My wife was in the bedroom putting our boy to sleep, and as she was not there to cheer me with her dear presence, the poison sank deep into my heart. From that hour I grew irritable and passionate towards her, which made her lose her cheerful calmness and look nervous whenever the uninvited guest appeared. I wanted to show him the door, but she would not allow it, saying wisely: 'Do you want him to tell the whole village that you are jealous of him, and that you mistrust your wife?'

"How many bitter hours he cost us both! Whenever he had been I scolded Marie till far into the night. It was her fault; if she were not so pleasant to him he would certainly not come again. And I, who formerly would have let her tread on me, if that could spare her aught, could now look on coldly when she wept for hours. Her joyous laughter ceased, and she always looked at me terrified. I wanted that she too should feel some of the misery that gnawed at my heart, for was it not her fault? The bad old woman often came through the forest where I hewed down trees and said—

"'Go home, you will find him there.'

"And I did find him once or twice, and at last I said: 'Marie, if I find him once more, there will happen mischief; I forewarn you.'

"And yet again one evil day that old woman came tramping through the deep snow, and laughed maliciously and said—

"'Go home! go home!'

"I shouldered my axe and ran home. There stood my wife, and she was red and angry, and was scolding that man. He only laughed. I seized him by the breast and swung the axe over his head. Marie seized me by the arm and cried—

"'Think of your son. He shall not have a murderer for his father!'

"My arm sank. I ran out of the door, far into the wood. There lay the stems and trunks I had hewn down, a crust of ice covered the snow, beneath ran the path that my enemy must tread to return to the village. I stretched out my arm and began to arrange the blocks in such a manner that they would slowly roll down. One must hit him, I thought, and then he will be dead, and I shall be no murderer.

"At the first footsteps I heard below I threw the trunks down, and they followed thick as hail. I did not look down. Suddenly a cry that pierced my very marrow rang upon the air. It was the cry of a child. I grew dizzy. True I sprang with lightning speed to the spot whence the cry had come. There lay the golden curls of my boy pressed in the snow; out of his open mouth there trickled blood, and his deer-like eyes looked at me solemnly. I called him by name; I pressed him to me; I breathed into his mouth; in vain—he was dead, dead! I took

him in my arms and bore him home; kicked open the door with my foot, and gave him to his mother with the words—

"'There you have your boy! The tree that was destined for your friend hit him.'

"She did not cry; she did not moan; she shed no tears; only her lips grew ashy. She held the boy for two days on her lap and spoke no word save a soft—

"'My child! my child!'

"It had to be taken from her forcibly to bury it. We did not speak again to one another. The friend had vanished, and the bad old woman, too, did not come again. Other people soon kept away, as I was so gruff and my wife so silent. So the days passed, and the weeks and the months. I might not enter her room. She begged me to leave her alone. I think she

sat all night long beside the bed of the child and pressed kisses on his pillow. Day by day she faded. I did not notice it. It never occurred to me to send for a doctor. I wanted no human being to behold our misery.

"One evening she called me with a weak voice to her bedside, and said calmly—

"'To-night I must die, but before I do I want to confess myself to you. I have hated you since the hour you killed my joy, and much though I have struggled, and greatly though I desired to have pity on you, yet hate was stronger.'

"'The greater your love for that other,' I hissed forth.

She raised her hand in oath.

"'Never; I was your faithful wife until the end.

I thank you for all the happiness of those first

years, and I forgive you the misery of the last. Kiss me, I love you once more.'

"For the first time I wept and craved her pardon for all I had done to her. She laid her hand once more on my brow, sighed a deep sigh, and was dead.

"Then I ran away into the mountains and could look at no human being. I wanted never to speak again, never to hear the sound of voices. I sought for Rest in the woods, in the rocks, with the eagles and bears, and yet I have not found her. My suffering is so great, I believe the very stars have pity on me. And old as I am, I cannot forget that I myself murdered my happiness."

The Hermit had done speaking. All the hot passions of his past life had been reflected by his features. Sorrow's eyes had looked at him fixedly, calmly, pityingly, sympathetically.

Now she beckoned towards the mountains behind which the sun was about to sink. On large broad pinions Rest came floating onwards, looked into the old man's eyes until they drooped, closed them with gentle hand, breathed over his rigid features till all traces of bitterness vanished thence, and the mouth, that was closed for ever, looked almost gentle. Sorrow had already vanished. She descended into the valley and wandered all night. For as often as she desired to turn the handle of a door, she drew it back, and thought of the Hermit and his fate.

LOTTY.



Lotty.



T was Christmas Eve. The snow was whirling in dense masses outside, and the wind was so strong that it

swept one side of the street quite clean, and piled up whole mountains of snow across the way. Through all the windows there gleamed the bright light of the merry Christmas trees, and the voices of hundreds of happy children were heard. Alone and softly Sorrow crept along in the snowstorm. She turned her eyes neither to right nor left, that she might throw no shadow over these Christmas gaieties; she was making for a house where there was no joy to

destroy. She passed two children—a girl in thin outgrown clothes, and a little boy who wanted to see all the lovely things that were inside the houses. His sister raised him up with all her strength, so that he could grapple hold of the window-sill, and with enchantment he looked at all the wonders within. But lifting her arms had made her poor old dress crack, and a sleeve came out of its seam. A tear ran down her face; it froze on her cheek. Sorrow stroked her head with her hand.

"I was coming to you," she said; "how go things at home?"

The girl shrugged her shoulders.

The little one coughs and can barely breathe, and the older sister says the pains in her legs are so bad with this wind.

"Won't you come home with me?"

"Oh no," said the boy, "it is so beautiful in there, so bright. Do you hear how they laugh?"

Sorrow did not look up but went further, and did not notice that Envy was creeping behind her, with his thin lips and sharp nose and squinting eyes. He came up to the children and whispered to them—

"Yes, it is beautiful in the homes of the rich, is it not? What have you got, you poor things? Is it not Christmas too for you?"

"Hu, how cold it is!" the boy said suddenly.

"Come, it is no longer pretty here."

And they ran home.

As they opened the door a haggard woman called out sharp and impatiently—

"Quick, shut the door, or all the snow will come in."

They cowered into a corner behind the hearth; the woman walked up and down, carrying a child in her arms that coughed and choked and gasped for air. In the only bed lay a feverish girl, emaciated, with unkempt hair and large restless eyes. Sorrow sat on the edge of the couch and held her hand; the girl talked incessantly, softly and quickly—

"You see it is Christmas, formerly that was so beautiful, when things still went well with us. Then we always had a tree and apples and gingerbread, and I had a doll that had clothes like a princess. I liked sewing them for my dolly; I don't like it now for other people."

She smiled.

"What a pity you can't see the little dress I made for this evening, white and red, with cords and pink bows." Then the crack of the door opened and Envy pushed himself in softly, invisibly. It grew markedly colder in the room. The mother's face became gloomy, the feverish girl more restless.

"Oh," she cried, impatiently, "always sewing, always sewing. Why do the others, who were poor, drive about in fine carriages, and wear soft clothes and laugh so merrily! If they are wicked, well, then it must be nice to be wicked. What does my industry bring me?—hunger and pain!"

The mother did not hear her daughter's rapid words, for the child in her arms was wrestling with death. Outside the wind howled. The two other children had fallen asleep in their corner, hungry and exhausted, and in their dreams Envy had no more power over them,

and they only saw the beautiful Christmas tree shimmering. It was a long night in which the lamp of life flickered up and down in that little house, and a young soul fought at the hand of Sorrow the fight for life and death.

Towards morning the wrestling of both was ended. The child lay dead in its mother's lap, the young girl slumbered restlessly. The storm was over. The glittering snow lay piled up high, looking blue in the shadows of the houses, and softly tinted with red where the rising sun met it. Then the bells began to peal for merry Christmas. That woke the two children, who stared aghast at the little corpse. The young girl raised herself, and saw that her mother wept, but from her eyes there came no tears—she envied the dead child its rest.

A merry sound of sledge bells sounded, and

like a lovely dream two beautiful young girls flew past in a sledge, wrapped snugly in rich furs. Their cheeks and eyes sparkled with joy in the beautiful sunshine. It passed like lightning, this vision, but all in the little house were dazzled by it. The sick girl drew her thin hands through her black hair, the poor woman bit her teeth together, and the two children said—

- " Mother, were those angels!"
- "No," she uttered harshly; "they were human beings like ourselves, only rich and happy, who are not hungry, and have warm clothes."

Sorrow touched her arm-

"If you desire it, I will bring them here, into your home; but at one price—they will suffer pain and misery, and their joy will vanish. Do you want that?"

"Yes," said the woman, "I do. Why should not they watch and weep as we do?"

Sorrow sighed.

"Shall I fetch them?" she asked once again.

"Go, go; do you not see that my children starve? What do other people's children concern me?"

Sorrow neared the young girl's bed.

"Farewell for the present," she said; "be brave and reasonable, and take care of yourself, that I may not have to come to you again to punish."

She kissed the children. "I send you the angels and a good Christmas, have patience."

Then she softly lifted the door latch and was gone. Envy slid after her; and in her place, on the first sunbeam that smote the rows of houses, Hope floated into the room and made it light.

Mother and children looked out expectantly. The girl pushed back her hair from her brow, and the bad thoughts retreated.

Sorrow paced so lightly across the snow that she scarcely left a trace, as though she were borne by the sharp east wind, whose pungent tongue mocked the fine winter morning. She went through the most aristocratic streets, and vanished into one of the stateliest houses; entering so softly that no one noticed her, not even the servants, who were stretching themselves on red cushioned divans in the entrance hall; not even the parrot that always cried, "Canaille! Canaille!" and made a wise face. She went up the broad stairs, where everything was perfumed of fir-trees, straight towards a high door, whence the laughter of youthful voices resounded. Unnoticed she stood in the high large room

through whose many windows the sun streamed, touching the white-covered, long tables, on which still lay all the presents given the night before. At one end of the room stood three tall fir-trees, their branches bent under a gay weight, and round about the room some thirty smaller ones. The six huge chandeliers were encircled with garlands of fir and chains of glass balls, and from one to the other hung rows of coloured paper lamps. It must have looked quite fairy-like in the evening with all the candles alight. Amidst this glory two tall slim, supple figures, in dark, close-fitting, cloth dresses, were playing battlecock and shuttledore. Every movement was of rare grace, and the delicate profiles with the dark arched eyebrows, stood out well against the sombre firs. The gold brown hair of the one hung in voluptuous waves

over her shoulders, only held together by a ribbon; a weight of fair plaits hung down the neck of the other. Their heads thrown backwards revealed a faultlessly set neck, and a laughing row of pearly teeth. It was a sight for gods, and the young man who looked on thought so, as he sat in Olympian calm carelessly reading in an armchair, dressed in an elegant morning suit, a cigarette in his ring-covered hand. From time to time, in a powerful baritone, he hummed some rather frivolous songs that each time drew down on him a storm of laughing reproaches.

"I beg my stern cousins to remark," he said, "that the ball has now fallen fourteen times to the ground, and that I consequently regret that my proposal was negatived that each such miss should be punished with a kiss."

The girls laughed, but suddenly they noticed Sorrow, who looked on seriously at their merriment, like a distant hail-cloud at a harvest home.

"Who are you?" both girls asked at once, approaching their strange guest.

Sorrow would fain have cast down her eyes that she might not look at the three young heads in that room; but she saw them, and felt herself spellbound. She looked at all three, and then said in her soft, deep tones—

"I have just come from a house where since yesterday no one has eaten, where this night a child has died, and a girl lies sick in bed; two other children I found out in the snowstorm as they were admiring a Christmas tree. Can you not help?"

"Yes, yes, at once," cried the one with the gold

brown locks. "Albert, be so good as to order the sledge. Cara, do you run to mother and ask her for money. I will get food and clothes."

With all imaginable speed everything was got ready. After a brief half-hour the sledge stood before the door laden with wood and baskets, and one of the Christmas trees. There was barely room for the three young people to squeeze in. The mother, a stately, elegant woman, with wise eyes, restrained the eldest girl, Doris, for a second to say something to her very earnestly, upon which she kissed both her hands. Then she, too, flew downstairs after the others, and as fast as the wind they trotted to the house of the poor people.

"Mother, the angels have come," cried the

They got out and brought in the tree. Cara

knelt down by the hearth and made a fire, and Doris placed the tree by the bedside of the sufferer, darkened the room and lighted it. She gave the children bread and cake, and then the two lovely girls stood by the sick girl's bedside and sang a Christmas carol. The little boy, with folded hands, looked now at the lights, now at the angels, and large tears rolled over his pale face. Albert did not quite know what to do with himself; but now that the two girls helped the mother to warm some soup and cut up meat for the children, he neared the bed, and looked with scrutiny into the black eyes that glowed and reflected with uncanny fire the lights of the Christmas tree.

"What is your name?" he asked kindly with his pleasant voice.

The girl looked at him long and earnestly; she

felt the gaze of his beautiful blue eyes burn into her heart. Then she grew red, cast down her eyes, and said: "Lotty."

Soon an animated conversation sprang up between the two. Albert took out his pocket-book, wrote a few lines, and sent off the servant with orders to bring the doctor back in the sledge. They would wait till he came. Doris's eyes rested for an instant on her cousin, who had seated himself on the edge of the bed and talked eagerly to Lotty. Scarcely was the sledge gone than she said—

"There, that will do for to-day; I will walk home. We will come again in a few days, till then you have provision."

And so speaking she walked out of the house, regardless of her cousin's remonstrances.

Next day all looked bright and cheerful in

the little room, but grief and pain had entered the palace. Cara had fallen on the ice while skating, and lay in bed maimed in all her limbs, and suffering keenly. Her snow-white hands lay quiescent beside her plaits upon the coverlet. Her father patted them, and the tears ran down his cheeks. Then Cara smiled, but her eyes looked out dim and deep from their hollows, and round her lips there quivered a suppressed sigh. Wearily she dragged on her life for weeks and weeks; but if any one asked Cara how she was, she would always answer kindly—

"I think I am much better."

But pain had pinched her face and emaciated her body, and her hands and feet remained paralyzed. Her only recreation were Albert's visits. He told her all manner of things, and sang her merry songs. Doris grew pale and this

with continued nursing, so that at last her mother had to force her to go out. She bethought her of Lotty, and went to call on her. How amazed was she to find the little house transformed, and Lotty changed more than all! Graceful, rounded in all her limbs, she stepped towards her, and the slight limp that remained from her illness only gave her an added grace. Her eyes had learned to laugh, and her whole being had gained something attractive and bright.

"But, Lotty, how well you look! I was afraid you would think we had forgotten you."

"How could I think that," said Lotty, "when your brother always came to see us!"

"He is not my brother," Doris said shortly, and grew scarlet.

Then ensued an awkward silence, interrupted by Doris, who asked to see the children's schoolbooks, which, superintended by Lotty, bore inspection well. They had gained good instruction in the time that had passed.

A few days after Albert went away on a journey. It was a hard parting for the two girls. At the last he kissed Doris's hand, and looked at her earnestly, deep down into her eyes. They filled with large tears. She wanted to say something more, but not could not bring forth a sound.

" I shall come back in the summer," he said, and was gone.

Lotty was soon so well that she could walk and call on Cara, who was so pleased to see her that she did not want to let her go. So she was engaged as companion and nurse for Cara, and soon grew indispensable to her.

In the spring the family moved to their castle

in the country, where the poor invalid could lie all day under tall trees. Albert soon came there too, and Doris took long rides with him through the park, or they sat for hours chatting with Cara. Yet he always found time and opportunity to see Lotty alone. At first she was distant with him, but with his heart-winning ways he soon recovered the empire he had had in the little house in the town; and she was happy when he said that the parents insisted on marrying Doris to him, but that he did not think of it, for she did not please him at all. Cara noticed that there was something amiss with her Lotty, but she never dreamed what a fight the girl was fighting with her heart, that impetuously demanded love and happiness, and her conscience that recalled to her her duties and strove to assuage her.

Doris guessed nothing. She was entirely absorbed in the joy of having her adored Albert beside her.

Albert really loved Lotty, but he did not want to lose the rich marriage with Doris; so he was full of little delicate attentions to her, which in quiet hours were counted up and talked over with Cara. Lotty knew herself to be beloved, therefore her jealousy of Doris knew no bounds. Every kind look, every unconscious little joke of Doris's was gall and wormwood to her. She had to help her adorn herself, and see how Doris looked into the glass with beaming eyes, certain of victory, full of hope. She had to suffer that her adored Cara did all to make her sister appear in the best light to Albert. Many an evening in the park there ensued angry scenes in which Lotty broke forth into wild reproaches, and

Albert made passionate love protestations. Lotty was proud; she would be his wife, and at last he promised her that he would marry her as soon as he had found a post that ensured enough for them both. He was soon to go abroad to join an embassy.

Lotty demanded that he should say openly at the house that he meant to marry her, but this she could not attain.

Once more Lotty thought-

"If only I were rich, like the others."

Many a long night she tossed about her black locks on the pillow, and next day her eyes glowed like coals, so that Albert grew almost afraid, and feared she might make things uncomfortable for him. He hurried forward his parting preparations. On the last evening he was in the park with Doris, and began to speak

to her of his future, and that he should come back a made man. Then he would woo her, and he hoped he should not be refused. At the last he put a bracelet round her wrist, encircled her with his arm and pressed a kiss on her lips. Doris flushed all over, ran off to Cara, fell on her knees beside the bed, kissed her hands, her hair, her eyes, and was so wildly happy that it grew almost too much for the poor invalid. When Albert wanted to leave the park Lotty stood before him and looked at him so sphinxlike that he grew afraid. He hoped she had heard nothing, and took a step forward. But she struck him in the face with her fist. Then she vanished. She ran as fast as her feet could carry her into her room, and raved all night long, bit her pillow, and thought to die of rage and despair.

Albert, who slept little, could not see Lotty again and extort from her a promise of silence. Twice he knocked at her door, but she kept quiet till he had gone and then she muttered curses after him. Next morning he departed without having seen her. Doris waved her hand after him long, long after he was out of sight, and wept blissful tears. But Cara was alarmed when she saw Lotty. A complete alteration had come to her face; it was as though something had snapped. She had to endure hearing Albert talked of incessantly. Towards Doris she felt a veritable hatred.

At first there came letters from Albert, but they grew rarer and briefer. After a year there came none. Doris had been radiantly happy some time and developed to rare beauty. At her side Hope stood shimmering, rosy, like peach

blossoms. By Cara's bed sat Mother Patience, invisible to all, and transfigured the pale face with her calm presence. Beside Lotty strode Envy and Hate, and tugged at her with all their might night and day. In the second year Hope vanished from beside Doris; in the third, the girl crept wearily through the house as though each step were leaden. Lotty revived; yes, Doris even noted that when Lotty combed her hair she could see in the glass how her black eyes sparkled maliciously, and seemed to search her weary face. Doris's parents grew old and grey during these years of waiting. Albert's name was never breathed, it was as though he was blotted out of all their memories, and yet all thought only of him.

One morning Doris was sitting at breakfast with her parents. Cara was still in bed, she was

never carried down till later in the day. The father read out of his paper, his wife rested her chin on her slender fingers. Countless fine lines had become graven into her face, Care was her daily guest; yet she looked kindly from under her grey hairs and her elegant cap. Secretly her glance sought her daughter's face, who had leaned back wearily in her chair, toying with a flower and gazing out vacantly into space.

Sometimes she would look out of the window, and watch with heavy eyelids the falling of the faded autumn leaves, which sank to earth in the thick mist. A fire burnt in the chimney; it was the only lively thing in the room. Then a letter was brought in and given to Doris's father. He twirled it between his fingers and looked at the address and seal. Doris had glanced up indifferently. Suddenly every muscle of her face

trembled, and she rested large, flashing eyes upon her father, her nostrils quivered, and her breath came short and fast.

"Oh, father, read, read quickly!"

He read long, long, without speaking one word. At last he folded up the letter. Doris's torture was at an end, she was near to faint.

"Albert is coming," he said gravely, and would have gone on speaking, but from Doris's breast there came a cry of mingled joy and sobbing. She sprang up, embraced her mother and rushed out of the room and up the stairs to Cara.

"Cara, he is coming, is coming," she cried, and covered her sister with kisses.

Lotty rushed to the bedside; it was as though a fallen angel looked at the happy girl. At last harshly and roughly she muttered—

"Who knows what he has become."

Doris felt the poisoned dart, but before she could answer her mother called her down. As she entered the room she saw her father pacing up and down restlessly. He did not notice her. Her mother sat in a little armchair beside the fire, staring into the embers. Doris noticed everything at a glance. It was as though something heavy and cold fell upon her heart.

"Come here, dear child," said her mother; "kneel down here, I have something to say to you. You have always trusted us, have you not, my child? You always believed that we have felt your sufferings too, and have felt them the, more that we could not help you?"

Doris could not speak, she kissed her mother's hand and looked at her again with large, glowing eyes.

"If, then, I tell you that Albert is not worthy

of you, my child will believe it, will she not? He has not kept good; it is said he has gambled away his fortune, and we should not like him to ask the hand of our daughter merely in order to pay his debts. I know you will be proud and meet him as it becomes your maidenly dignity. You will let him see nothing of your soul's combat and woe, but meet him as he deserves."

"When will he come?" said Doris, curtly. Her voice was hard.

"In a few days; we cannot forbid him the house for his mother's sake. I count on you, my child."

Doris's eyes flashed. She raised herself and stood her full height; she seemed to have grown, and looked defiant, ready for fight. Without a word she went outside into the mist. She paced the park for hours, heedless of the paths and ways; she painted to her mind that meeting, how cold and proud she would be. She snapped off the twigs as she passed, and crunched them with her white teeth. It seemed to her as though she never could go home, as though she must thus rove the wood for ever. When she came back to the house at last, her hair, dress, and eyebrows were covered with glistening drops. She looked into the glass that reflected her hard-drawn face.

"The wood," she said, "has had pity on me; those are its tears."

She could not make up her mind to go in to Cara; she felt as though she could not bear her affection. Cara wept long in her father's arms. He dried the tears she was shedding for her sister, and spoke to her tenderly. Lotty clenched her fists.

"She shall not have him as long as I live."

Henceforward Doris went often into the wood, especially along the path beside the old willow-trees. The sun still shone warmly there, and that did good to Doris, who could not get rid of a feeling of cold. Once she leaned exhausted against a mighty trunk; she had laid her hand upon her aching heart, and closed her eyes. Suddenly she heard a voice close by her, whose tone made her shrink together as a flower does in spring rain—

"Doris."

And there stood Albert, with the same lovely eyes, the same charm of movement, and yet how changed. He held out his hand towards her. She laid her icy fingertips into his; but when she wanted to draw back her hand he retained it.

"Am I to be condemned unheard?" he asked gently, and smiled so sweetly that Doris could not be as distant and cold as she had resolved.

He did not wait for an answer, but spoke eagerly and earnestly, accused and defended himself at the same time, reminded her of their sweet love that could not possibly be vanished and fled; ay, he read it in her face that she had thought of him, while poor Doris, now red, now pale, could merely look at him. When he turned to go to the house and greet his aunt, she remained outside, for an awkward friend, Conscience, told her that she had not been all that her parents expected.

They did not repeat their injunction, and the meetings in the park grew more and more frequent; a correspondence even ensued that was entrusted to a hollow willow. Doris's mother noticed a strange, wild look in the girl's eyes, but she put this down to the struggle her child was undergoing.

Often Doris would have opened her lips to confess, but always closed them again. Daily she grew more irritable, spoke in hollow tones, and laughed at everything. Lotty knew exactly all that went on. She bided her time, ready to spring like a cat whenever the hour should be ripe. One day Doris could not get out, and so begged Lotty, in a seemingly indifferent tone, to carry a letter to the tree. Lotty held the letter between her fingers and looked now at it, now at Doris.

"Well," said Doris, sharply, but without looking up, "is it inconvenient to you?"

"No," said Lotty, carelessly, went towards the door, and then came back beside Doris.

"I shall only carry that letter," she said, "after I have told you what manner of man your lover is."

Lotty looked so fierce that Doris shuddered.

"He loved me, me, long before he loved you; me he has kissed many hundred times in this very park ere ever he gave you the one that made you so happy; me he promised to wed. It is me he called his dear heart, his love, all the soft names he has called you; and on the evening you were betrothed to him, I hit him in his face, and now he is so vile that no decent girl would wish to have him; and you, you carry on a secret love affair with him."

Doris grew giddy; but before she had taken in the full sense of these words, Lotty had left the room and did not re-appear.

The following evening, when Lotty had just

got into bed, Doris stood before her like a ghost. She shook her arms and said--

"Come!"

She followed Doris into her room. The girl shut and locked the door, and pocketed the key.

"Now tell it me all again," she said, speaking with effort.

Lotty no longer felt the satisfaction she had experienced that first moment. She was ashamed of her weakness, and told her tale with hesitation and with reserve. While she did so she had ever to look at Doris, who grew momentarily more haggard, and who bent herself twice, thrice; whether in physical or mental pain Lotty did not know. Suppressing a low moan, she drew a small roll of paper from her pocket, and smiled with trembling lips.

"You have avenged yourself on me; now is your turn with him; you owe me this, for you should have spared me this agony. To-morrow morning you go to town and give him this; you yourself must give it him; I demand it."

Scarcely had Doris uttered these words than she began to moan piteously, and now followed a night during which Lotty was terrified by the sufferings of her young mistress. Constantly she tried to get the key and call the family; Doris would not let her.

"No," she said; "we two must pass this night alone together."

Only when consciousness began to leave her, Lotty succeeded in wrenching the key from her clenched hands. She called up the parents, who arrived but in time to receive their daughter's last breath. She opened her eyes once again, knew her mother, kissed each of her fingertips and whispered—

"Farewell, mother; farewell, mother; forgive me."

Then a last terrible spasm shook her, and when the sun rose she was a corpse. While the parents were with Cara, trying to break the news gently to the poor invalid, Lotty slipped away into her own room. There she unrolled the paper and read—

"Could I have believed in you, I should have lived.—DORIS."

Then she set out for the town and sought out Albert, who was still in bed sleeping restlessly. Lotty looked at him long and severely. Her gaze was so savage that a feeling of fear shot through him and woke him. He started up.

"What is it?" he cried aghast.

Lotty handed him the paper without speaking a word, and before he had unfolded it she had gone.

He threw on his clothes and hurried after her, but he could not find her. He ran about all day: he hovered round the castle, he chased through the park. He looked as though the Furies pursued him. At last he went home, sat down to his desk, and began to turn over a pile of dirty papers. Great drops stood on his brow. In the evening he went to see a friend, and gambled the whole night. In a short time he had won large sums, but then a few days after he lost them all again, those and much more besides. One morning he tottered into his room, loaded a pistol and shot himself.

Lotty got home unnoticed as she had gone out; but as she entered Sorrow stood in front of her, and her eyes were so terrible that Lotty fell down before her on the earth and covered her face with her hands. But when Sorrow began to speak, Lotty was seized with trembling at the stern words that fell upon her like hammer blows; she writhed on the ground like a worm, but Sorrow was inexorable.

"You have done your work well," she said; "you have avenged yourself. But on whom? On those who have done you kindness from the first hour when they raised you out of misery and wretchedness, those to whom you owe all—your life, your health—who have treated you as a child and a sister. They were happy before I brought them to your house, and what are they now? I know you want to throw yourself into the water, but I will not suffer it, for you need a whole long life to make good the thoughts that

have poisoned your youth. You must give up your whole strength to poor Cara, beside whose bed you will yet often see me, and take care that you need not tremble before my face, as you must to-day. Cara needs you, for her parents are broken down, and only through boundless self-sacrifice may you dare to hope for forgiveness. As yet I cannot accord it."

Once more it was Christmas Eve. A beautiful tree was alight in the little house. Lotty had brought it there in Cara's name. The children had red cheeks and shouted joyously. The mother too had grown to look younger and smiled often. Only Lotty was pale as death and dark as remorse.

"Here my mother looks at me," she thought; "and thinks Lotty has grown bad; and there Doris's mother looks at me and thinks, 'Had you but called me we could have saved the child.'
Oh that I had starved to death!"

In the castle a shaded lamp burnt beside Cara's bed. Her father was reading to her with weary voice, the mother sat by, stroked the girl's hands, and dried the heavy, slow-falling tears that rolled down her child's face with a soft handkerchief. Cara had not spoken all the evening. Only once she asked—

" Is not this Christmas Eve?"

MEDUSA.



Wedusa.



HE waters tossed and foamed through the huge rocks that were pressed so close together that up amid the

heights a strip of blue sky was scarcely to be seen. Upon a narrow slippery path, alongside the oozy rocky walls, ran Sorrow, as fast as though the path were sure and the surroundings a flowery meadow. The rushing waters threatened every moment to engulf her. Their thunder, repeated by a thousand echoes, seemed to grow yet louder, and sounded so menacing as though the audacious pilgrim must turn back before them. But with burning cheeks Sorrow

hurried onwards, and her long black hair floated behind her like a sombre cloud. Her nostrils quivered, her lips opened and shut, with outstretched arms she whispered or called something, but the sound died away before it was spoken. Her eyes stared into space as though she would search the depths, and yet they had fain be cast down, for the gorge narrowed and the last trace of a path was inundated by the Beneath her surged a whirlpool, above water. her rushed the waters, rushed down in ever new masses; now it sounded like song, now like moaning voices, now like pealing thunder. One moment she halted, then she raised her thin skirts and began to wade through the water where the rocks had quieted it a little and scooped out a place large enough for her small fect. With one hand she held herself against

the rocky wall and looked from time to time into the depths where vawned the opening of a cavern. At the risk of death she reached the entrance and stood still a second, breathing deeply. Once more her gaze eagerly swept the sides of the cliffs; there was no projection on which to gain a footing, no bird could have stood there. Out of the cavern's mouth there gushed water, and it too offered no road. One more look did she cast back, then she resolutely entered the cave and groped through it in the dark, along the wet stones. Often she sank deep into the waters. When she lost sight of the last sheen of daylight she resolved to wade. and did not feel in the icy cold of the water how the stones cut her feet. At last a red spot gleamed. She thought it was the daylight outside the cavern. Then the space enlarged. In

this impenetrable darkness there was a huge vault adorned with columns and capitals and ornaments of all kinds. Darting lights and shades quivered through the hall, which reechoed with the sound of weeping and moaning. It was a confusion of sobbing women, whimpering children, groaning, sighing men, and every flash of light seemed to increase the misery. Sorrow pressed her hands upon her breast and panted. She was so dazzled that at first she could not see whence these lightnings came; the horrible sounds about her made her giddy. She leaned against one of the shining columns and shading her eyes with her hand, sought to follow the water-course and so discover the exit. There she beheld a colossal man, as tall, rough, and angular as the columns around. His ardent eyes were fixed on her.

In his hand he held the lightnings, which from time to time he threw across the cave like fiery arrows or blue snakes.

"Come here, little Sorrow," he called in a voice of thunder. "Have you found your way to me? Come here, for you are mine."

Sorrow clung to the pillar against which she leaned and seized one of its pendent points. Pale as death, she glared at the monster who beckoned to her.

"I will not come to you," she said at last. "I do not know you. I seek for Peace whom I saw go in here, and I am hurrying after him. Oh," she cried, and wrung her hands; "oh, have you hidden him here, or perchance killed him, you terrible man?"

"I am Pain. Peace is not here, but beyond this cave, in the happy valley." "Show me the exit that I may follow him;" and Sorrow sank down on her knees imploringly.

The fearful man laughed, and his laughter was louder than the rushing and thundering of the waters, more terrible than the sound of moaning round about.

"No, child; you and I, we do not belong to the happy valley, and the exit thither is barred to us by the weepers who fill this cave, and who are our victims. We two belong together. You shall be my wife, and we will seek a spot to fix our dwelling."

"Your wife!"

The words came from Sorrow's breast like a cry, but they were drowned in laughter. Then she darted up and turned to fly. But her arm was seized in such a grip that she thought it would break, and Pain swung his lightnings over her head.

"If ever you flee from me," he roared, "one of these shall fall on you, and what you will then feel will be so horrible that crushed, burnt, tortured, you will scarcely be able to moan like these wretches. I will show them to you."

· He lifted the hand that held the lightnings and illuminated the whole space. No human words can tell what fearful forms filled it. Of every age and sex stricken ones lay around. They wound themselves in agony, they lacerated themselves with their fists, they clawed the stones and with the nails of their hands and feet they tried to raise themselves. Horrid wounds were held under the falling drops to cool them. Women writhed in eternal birth-throes and could not bring forth; children beat their heads

sore against the rocky walls to overpower the pain that gnawed their entrails. Many lay on their knees and wrung their hands and beat their breasts in unextinguishable remorse. Others lay motionless, as though dead, only their eyes moved slowly in their sockets, following the direction of the light. Sorrow veiled her face and tottered; Pain caught her in his arms and pressed her to his breast.

"As great as are these agonies, so great is my love," he said.

Sorrow wept passionately.

"How could you think Peace could be yours. You have nothing in common with him. You are mine; you belong to me. I have loved you in your deeds without beholding you; your traces delighted my eyes."

He drew her hands away from her face and

kissed her. Sorrow closed her eyes that she might not see him, but under her dark lids tears welled forth, which he kissed away.

"Weep, weep, my little maid; your tears are dew, far fairer than your laughter, they refresh and cheer me."

She tried to get loose from him, but he held her with his iron grasp.

"If you are afraid here," he said, "I will bear you to a sweet spot and win you there with violence."

He hastily raised the trembling maiden in his arms, threw a lightning in front of him that traced a line of light along the whole dark passage, and wading through the waters that seemed to retreat from his feet, he hurried to the cavern's mouth. He bore her past the waterfall, and when he let her glide to earth, he took hold of her hand, as though he feared she would escape him. She often looked back and tried to think of the happy valley, but to her mental vision there ever appeared only the cave with its desperate inhabitants. She hoped the terrible man might grow weary, and then if sleep overcame him, she could flee; therefore she complained of fatigue. But Pain was never weary; he instantly carried her again, and went onwards yet faster.

"Be happy," he said, "for now at least some one carries you."

She turned her head away from his gleaming eyes. Then a great sense of weakness came over her, and it seemed to her as though they were going backwards, as though the rushing of the river came ever nearer, as though his eyes pierced her breast. Powerless to speak or move,

she lay in the arms of Pain. Oh, where—where was her brother Death, who could have freed her? Where her father Strife? He would have wrestled with her captor. Or was he too powerless against this all-mighty Pain? She would have prayed the river, the trees, the grasses to help her, but they did not see her need. At last she lost consciousness, and when she woke she lay under a rock amid deep hot sand—no tree, no song of bird, no murmur of waters; only sand, yellow burning sand and golden air that quivered in the heat.

"My wife," said Pain, and his eyes burnt like the sand and the air, and seemed to drain Sorrow's life blood. Her tears began to flow anew.

"Oh! how thirsty I am," she moaned.

Pain looked at her with satisfaction.

"Well," he said, "was it not beautiful in that cool gorge, so near to the cold foaming river? Do you recall how clear it was, and how it gushed out of the rocks? It came from the happy valley, that is so full of luscious fruits, fruits such as you have never beheld. Shall I show it you?"

At his words Sorrow's eyes had grown ever bigger, her lips more parched.

"Yes, yes," she panted, and behold, away, across the sand, there shimmered in the air a broad stream, and beside it were shady trees laden with fruits. Without knowing what she did, Sorrow sprang up and ran to the river as fast as she could, through the deep sand, under the scorching sunbeams. But the river seemed to retreat ever farther from her, and at last it had vanished. At the same moment Pain

laughed behind her, and it sounded as though the whole desert laughed.

"Do you now see that you are wholly in my power; you can even only think as I will. Here is water."

He showed her a few trees that overshadowed a well. Sorrow fell down beside it and drank eager draughts. Then she sank into a deep sleep. When she woke the trees were withered, the well dried up, and there was again nothing but sand as far as the eye could reach.

"Do you see," said Pain, "we are stronger than the sun and the desert wind; all must vanish before our might. Wherever we have passed pestilence has broken out, towns and villages are burnt; and where we set up our dwelling the earth grows a desert."

Sorrow wrung her hands. She sprang up

and hurried forward. A whole long day she sped on, on, and did not see that he followed. At evening he came towards her and laughed, and laughed so long that the whole desert grew noisy, and hyænas and jackals began to howl, and lions approached roaring. But Pain held them in check with his look of fire, so that they only walked round them from afar off all the night. When day dawned the wild beasts withdrew.

"Oh," said Sorrow, "I die of fear. Take me away from here, wherever you will, only away from this heat, these horrid beasts."

"Do you want coolness, love? You shall have it."

He took her in his arms and bore her fast as the wind towards the north, ever farther, past the homes of men, past fields and cities, across the ocean, which he waded through, up to the North. There lay a lovely islet, and birches shook their tender foliage in the fresh breezes.

"Here we will found our happy valley," said Pain, and beckoned.

And as he beckoned the wind blew colder and sharper, the grass crackled under his feet as it withered and froze, and from the ocean there neared crystal mountains that came closer and closer to the land, and the wind that drove them to shore howled dismally. Soon the whole air was filled with snow that whirled from above, from below, from all sides, choking like fine sand. Ice-blocks were piled upon ice-blocks, there was much thundering and crackling, but at last all was still, wrapped in snow and awful silence. The transparent rocks

stared up to the heavens like frozen joy. Pain flung a lightning dart into the ice. It bored a blue-green glistening cave in which he laid Sorrow.

"Do you stay here and rest," he said; "I will search for a verdant spot. But do not stir from here, for out of the ice-fields you will never find your road back to the happy valley."

Scarcely had he gone than Sorrow felt her frozen blood revive, and the terrible woe in her breast seemed to yield. First she leaned on her hand and peeped out, then she knelt and breathed on rhe numbed fingers, then she stepped outside. There towered blocks of ice; here snow was spread in endless extent. She knew that the snow covered the island and the ice-blocks the sea, and it was over the ice-blocks that she must wander, for otherwise she

could not get across it. She began to slip through the cracks and crevices, to jump from one block to another, following the sunbeams that alone marked a track for her. She did not rest when night came for fear she should be pursued. Twice she went round the island without knowing it, in her senseless fear; but at last the sun led her out of the ice-bound world and across the first green blades of grass. Then she sank down for very weariness. How she found her road back to the mountain gorge she never knew. She entered it trembling. If he was already here, he from whom she had fled, then she was lost. After her wanderings upon the ice, this road seemed to be quite easy, and her fearful glances around were not directed to the masses of water that poured down yet more wildly than when she had first come here,

and which seemed to threaten her tender form at every moment, as though they would sweep her away like a leaf. Trembling in every limb, and with chattering teeth, Sorrow entered the dreadful cave.

It was dark, and the confusion of voices resounded painfully through the vaults. Suddenly she felt herself surrounded on all sides, and held by her hands and clothes.

"I will not let you go before you liberate me," a voice sounded at her ear.

"Give me back happiness," moaned another.

" Make me well again," cried a third.

"We are but echoes of the woes of earth," they cried; "but you shall hear us, though you stay here for ever."

"But I cannot help you," wailed Sorrow.

Yes," they shricked; "you can bring woe,

but you will not free us. Revenge! revenge!"

And Sorrow felt herself pressed against the angular columns, and in the noise that clamoured round her, she heard—

"Bind her, bind her, tear out her heart. Blind the eyes of her who has brought so much woe."

In her fear she cried-

"Beware what you do, Pain comes behind me, and terrible will be his revenge if you break a hair of my head."

Then she forced a road for herself and ran on, on to the spot where she fancied was the outlet. She groped a long while along the dripping walls, but just as she had found it, she felt herself held anew, and a voice said—

"And what will Pain do to you if you flee thither? Kiss me, or I will betray you." "Do not kiss him, his face is quite mutilated," called another voice.

"I will betray you," was whispered into her ear. "I will hold you fast until Pain comes. Kiss me."

Sorrow bent down trembling, and touched a hideous mass with her delicate lips; then she freed herself shuddering, and fled on again along the dark passage. She had to bend nearly double, it grew so low. She dipped her hand in the water and washed her face. It seemed to her as if she never advanced, as if she would never reach the end. At last there shone a bright spot that slowly grew larger. There, yes there, gleamed the dear sun; there must be the happy valley. But how, if Peace, whom she had sought in vain over the whole earth, were there no longer! But if he were not, she could

at least follow in his footsteps, and rest there where he had passed.

Now the outlet of the cave yawned, and Sorrow stood still dazzled. Whatever there was that was fair on earth, whatever could be pictured of power and beauty, was all collected in that valley—luscious greenery, wealth of flowers that covered the earth or crept along the giant trees in lovely garlands, trees that no axe had ever touched, and a singing of birds like heavenly music. A deep green lake reflected all this beauty; deer and gazelles stood around it and drank.

At Sorrow's feet shone strawberries in rich red masses, above her head hovered a bird of paradise, the tip of his golden tail touched her hair.

Suddenly Sorrow heard a voice, at whose

tones it seemed to her as though her heart leapt from her mouth. At first it sounded so soft, so full and gentle, like purest melody; then it seemed to retreat. Sorrow held her breath. Now again it came nearer, and at last she could hear the words.

"You are the only maid on earth whom I can love, and you will not stay with me! Is it not fair enough here to please you?"

To whom were these words spoken, for whom the caressing sound of that voice? Sorrow bent back a branch and beheld Peace with his heavenly eyes, calm like a deep lake, and his radiant face of blooming youth. Sorrow was so sunk in contemplation that she forgot herself, her existence, and the sufferings she had endured. Her soul was in her eyes and quaffed eagerly this first refreshment. Then another face came

to view. Sorrow at once recognized Work by her bright blue eyes and the waving of her golden locks. She was blushing and tending her sweet lips to Peace. How lovely they both were under the green half shadows of the broad leaves! Sorrow held her breath, the branch trembled in her hand.

"Do not go back to earth," Peace pleaded;
"you know what that is like."

"I must, I must," said Work. "I am the comforter in all need, I have dried the tears of even Sorrow herself."

"Oh do not speak of Sorrow here."

"Have you ever beheld her?"

"I have beheld her!" and Peace's eyes grew veiled; "and she destroyed my heaven with her ugly eyes. I have fled from her across the whole world and hidden here from her sight, for through that awful cave she will not come. Her victims will not let her pass, if ever she sets foot in it."

At that instant the poor listener felt herself seized in an iron grasp, and the cry that would have issued from her was stifled by a strong hand. She reeled back through the dark passage, into the cavern in which lightning flamed. Now she was forcibly bound and before her stood Pain in towering passion.

"What shall I do to you, faithless one?" he gnashed.

"Revenge, revenge!" resounded from all sides, and a rain of stones hit the defenceless one.

Sorrow sank on her knees, but Pain raised her.

"No," he said, "she is not to be given over to you, for she must return to earth; but I will return her to earth in such a manner that she shall with unconcern do yet more mischief than heretofore."

He seized Sorrow by her hair and drew her forth relentlessly, away from the howls of the cave which pursued her long.

It was twilight outside; under the rocks it was already night. Sorrow was dragged onwards, she knew not how, she knew not whither. Now she flew up the mountain sides, ever higher, higher, dragged, when her tottering knees would no longer bear her, across bare stones and through thorn-bushes. A fearful storm raged. At last she reached a high mountain top on which there was only room for her foot. Here she stood a second above the dark-threatening mountain forest lashed by the wind, high and free, above the mountains

and the clefts, above the firs and the waters, alone in the world. She no longer felt, she did not see Pain who cowered near to her on a rocky ledge and waited. Now he raised his hand and cast lightning upon lightning towards her. From her crown to her feet she felt herself torn and penetrated by these glowing rays.

She silently extended her arms and turned round slowly. As she did so, the last lightning dart pierced through her eyes into her heart, and she fell down, down, deep into the yawning precipice. Pain listened until he heard her fall, and then laughed terribly. The mountains answered his laugh with thundrous voice, the firs bent and broke, the waters stood still a second for fear.

How long Sorrow lay in that abyss none knew, for none asked after her. The firs alone

kept watch over the sleeper and whispered dreams to her that she did not hear.

One day strong steps broke the silence, and Courage, his club upon his shoulder, came singing by. He beheld Sorrow as she lay there, her head on a stone, her feet in the water, encircled with her long black hair that had been bathed in blood. He raised the body and rubbed her numb hands.

"Have I got you at last?" he said, "I wanted to find you. You may not die, you must be alive again."

He warmed her in his arms, he revived her with his breath until she opened her eyes.

"Why do you seek me?" she asked in tuncless voice. "I am dead."

"The world misses you, you must wander again. Sin reigns unchecked since you have vanished." "Let her keep her empire," said Sorrow, and closed her eyes.

Courage shook her.

"It must not be, little sister, you must wander again."

"But I am dead, do you not see? Do you not see that I am burnt?—my brain, my eyes, my heart; leave me alone."

"That does not concern the world whether you wander through it dead or alive, but wander you must. I will not let you go till you do."

He raised her on her feet. She turned and looked at him. He grew pale. Her face was stony, her eyes stony, her hair hung round her rigid and dead.

"Shall I go?" she said, without moving her lips.

"Go" said Courage, "for you all pains are

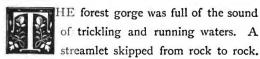
past; you will gaze into the world indifferently, a fearful enemy to Sin."

Sorrow swept her hair from off her marble brow, and tried to collect herself. As memory stirred, her eyes began to flash again; but their light died down almost immediately. Yes, she had grown terrible, as terrible as Pain had desired in his fierce vengeance, as terrible as she needed to be to put a curb on Sin. Poor little Sorrow!

HEAVENLY GIFTS.



heavenly Gifts.



Through the dense foliage a sunbeam crept here and there, and changed into a rainbow in the embraces of the waters. Here and there dark little pools formed, upon whose surface floated a withered leaf, until it came too close to the current and vanished, whirling over the nearest waterfall. Huge tree trunks had fallen across the gorge. They were used as bridges by the mosses and climbing plants that overgrew them

with exuberant vitality, and hung down from their sides as though they would drink of the waters that murmured beneath. There of a sudden a wondrously beautiful white arm stretched forth from out the climbing plants. In its delicate hand it held a staff of rock crystal with a diamond knob, that flashed and glistened strangely, as though the sun had stepped down to behold itself in the mountain stream. Then fair curls came to view over the confusion of plants that covered the tree trunk; then a rosy face, with large dreamy eyes, now black, now dark blue in colour, according to the thoughts that swayed under the cover of its curls. Anon the charming being knelt, and one could see the golden girdle that held the soft garment which clung about her tender form, and her other hand that held a spindle cut from a single

emerald, which she twirled in the air as though she would that it outshine the green of the beech leaves.

"Oh, Märchen," Märchen," the brook began to sing, "will you not bathe to-day? Put by your staff and spindle and dip down to me. I have not kissed you to-day."

The fair head peeped down and looked into the wood. No, there was no one there, not even a deer. So Märchen laid distaff and spindle among the moss of the tree trunk, twisted her hair into a knot, let fall her linen garment, and, seizing hold of two twigs, let

I have been forced to keep the German word, as no English one covers that peculiar type of German fanciful stories that are known under this appellation. *Märchen* are something more than fairy tales; something deeper, wider, richer, and more varied. The queen calls the present book a cycle of *Märchen*.—TRANSLATOR.

herself glide down to the surface of the brook, and then began to swing merrily to and fro, her feet touching the water as she swung. But the brook did not cease from singing, and from imploring her to come down into him. Then she let go the twigs, and fell, like a shower of spring blossoms, into its wavelets.

Far from here was a lonely gorge. Rock towered upon rock, and a torrent forced its way through with difficulty. There a grave man leaned and looked down into the waterfall. His brow was thoughtful; the hand that rested upon the stones was delicate, almost suffering. A pencil had fallen from its grasp. Suddenly there sounded a wondrous singing from out the waterfall, and the man's brow grew clearer as he listened. That was the moment when Märchen had touched the waters, and it sang

and sounded and was full of lovely forms and sweet songs and many fair things that attracted that lonely man. He listened enraptured, and his soul expanded with the things he heard. The brook itself hardly knew what it babbled; it still trembled from having felt Märchen's touch, and it sang for sheer joy. The lonely man departed with lightened brow and airy steps as though the air bore him. He had not long gone before Märchen appeared upon one of the highest rocks, swung her distaff in the air, and filled it with gossamer that glistened in the dew. Then she skipped down, broke a branch from a blossoming wild rose-bush and encircled the distaff with it in lieu of a ribbon, put it into her belt, and, jumping from stone to stone, crossed the brook and went far into the forest. The birds flew about her and chirped to her news of the east and west, the north and south. Squirrels slid out of the trees, seated themselves at her feet, looked at her with their sage eyes, and recounted all that had happened in the wood. The deer and does came about her; even the blind worms reared their heads and chattered with their sharp tongues. Märchen stood still and listened; and from time to time she touched her distaff as though she would say, "Remember."

The forest grew ever denser, the flowers that sent out their scent to Märchen more luxurious. At last she had to bend the branches apart in order to penetrate further. There stood a dream-like castle with tall gabled windows, into which grew the tree branches, and from out which tumbled creeping plants. Roof and walls had vanished beneath the roses that grew over

all things, and out of the castle sounded a thousand songs of birds. Märchen stepped to the open door and entered the wide hall, whose floor and walls were of jewels, and in whose midst a tall fountain played. Round about stood hundreds of Kobolds. They had brought with them little stools of pure gold, and waited to see if their sweet queen be content. She smiled approvingly, and thanked her friends. In midst of all this shimmering splendour fair Märchen stood like a reviving sunbeam.

"See how I have filled my distaff to-day," she said, genially. "I believe a magnet lives in your crystal, to which all things fly. Will you not fill it yet fuller?"

The Kobolds frowned, which made them look very comic, and one said—

"We have resolved to tell you nothing more,

because you let it flow from you like the water that tumbles yonder. We have watched you. When you go forth at eve, you go to our enemies, the mortals—those wretched thieves that rob our treasures, and you tell them our secrets."

"No," said Märchen, "I do not go to all mortals; only to some—your friends, who love you as I do; and I only tell them as much as they deserve. Will you not go on trusting me?"

They pushed a golden stool near to the fountain and began to recount to Märchen, whose eyes gleamed like the ocean. When she had heard enough, and given it to the distaff to guard, she nodded to her little guests, who hurried away. She then passed into the nearest chamber. There stood such a wealth of flowers that one could not tell where first to rest one's eyes.

The walls were covered with all the wonders of the tropics; from the ceiling hung orchids; the floor was overgrown with soft green moss, from which peeped crocuses, hyacinths, violets, primroses, and lilies of the valley. Humming-birds and nightingales greeted their queen joyously, while from the flower crowns elves uprose and stretched out their arms in love.

Märchen seated herself on the grass and let them talk to her, toyed with the fair flowerchildren and began to sing in unison with the birds. Then she entered the next room, whose walls were pure rock crystal, that reflected Märchen many hundred times. In its centre, under mighty palm fans, was a large basin, studded with rubies, into which foamed a waterfall. The nixes lay around it upon couches, and waited for the beauty whom as yet they had not seen that day. But Märchen wanted to hear no more; she had, like a true queen, given ear to so many that she was overpowered with fatigue, and craved rest. So she passed into the next room, that was a single little bower of rushes and bindweeds; the ground was strewn with poppy flowers, and in its midst stood the fairest couch eye has seen—one single, large rose—into which Märchen laid herself, and that closed its leaves above her.

Now the rushes began to rustle like an echo of distant singing, and the bindweeds tolled their bells, and the poppies gave forth their faint odour, and Märchen slumbered deep and sweet until the evening.

When the sun was sinking, and gazed like a large, glowing eye between the trunks of the forest, so that all the leaves looked golden, Märchen awoke, placed her distaff in her girdle, put the spindle beside it, and stepped outside.

Twilight was creeping up mysteriously and dreamily and spreading its wings over the forest. The birds grew still; only the toads in the watery gorge began their one-toned song. A gentle murmur ran through the leaves and across the parched grass, for all wanted to look on Märchen and aspired towards her. Now the moon rose and threw bright lights hither and thither and haunted the trees. He wanted to kiss Märchen and entice her forth to play upon the forest meadow.

"The elves await you," he called after Märchen, who would not listen, but floated on airily, as though the evening breezes bore her. A mill stood beside the brook in the shadow of the beeches. A fire gleamed within it, around

which people sat gathered. Märchen entered, and called the children. They flew towards her and drew her to the fireside, brought her a stool to sit upon, and gazed with large, eager eyes at her full distaff.

Märchen caressed the dear, fair heads, drew forth the spindle, knotted the yarn, and began to spin. And while the spindle floated up and down, swirling, she told them what she beheld in the yarn, until from sheer listening the children's eyes fell to, and they never knew next day whether they had really seen Märchen or only in their sleep. She herself slipped out and glided between the trees till she came to a meadow shimmering in evening mist. Hundreds of butterflies hung upon the myriad flowers, two and three on one blossom, and slept so deep and sound that the heads of the sleepy

flowers hung deep down under the weight of so many guests. Only the large night-moth floated about darkly and watched over the whole.

"I wonder if the butterflies dream," thought Märchen, as she knelt down beside the flowers and approached her ear.

Yes, they dreamed of the journeys they had taken that day; they dreamed they had gained far fairer colours: just such green, blue, and red hues like the flowers and leaves. Even the plainest grey one dreamt of colours brighter than the gayest parrot. The flowers dreamt that a warm wind touched them, and gave to them far sweeter scents than they had ever owned—quite intoxicatingly luscious. It was Märchen's breath which they had felt in their sleep.

Soon Märchen came to a pretty house beside a gurgling stream. The water formed a quiet little pool, in which the moon and the ivy-grown house were reflected. The beeches dipped the tips of their branches into it, and a nightingale sang lonesomely into the night. Up in the house burnt a solitary light, like to a glowworm. Märchen entered the house as though it were most familiar to her, opened a door softly, and stepped within a little room. In a deep armchair, beside a writing-table, sat a handsome, pale, agitated man. His head was sunk in his palm, and he gazed with lightless eyes across the table, on which Sorrow was resting both her hands.

"See," he said, "this morning, beside the mountain stream, I was glad for a moment. Pictures filled my brain, but now all is empty and dead, and I am so weary-so weary. wish to die. I cannot forgive my body that it still lives on, and yet a heavenly gift dwells within me that keeps me alive and makes me believe I could still create. But I do nothing more. Fatigue has grown stronger than aught else in this ugly world. Would that I had never been born, for I am a man who must reflect the whole world in its pain and suffering and falsehood. I love men too much, and therefore they have no faces for me. I only see their souls, and these are beautiful notwithstanding all wickedness and misery. Now I grow miserable with them. I should like to hide before my own eyes, for I am worth nothing-nothing. All that I do is vain, and will vanish unheard; all I think others know much better. A fire burns in me that consumes me in lieu of warming my fellow-men. I feel like one that is drowning, to whom no saving hand is extended. I should be a man and save myself, but my strength is at an end. I have lived too much. I have lived through all that which others have felt, and borne my own woes besides. Now it is too much, do you see—too much; and I can no longer give to the world what I fain would have given it—all the new, great, lovely things that dwell in my brain. But it had no time to listen to me. And perhaps there is, after all, no value in these things, though to my small mind they seemed so great. Yet they cannot bear the light. I am weary. I want to die."

Sorrow listened, and never took her eyes from him; but her pitying gaze made him yet more irritable and desperate. Suddenly Märchen stood before him, with glittering distaff, with shining teeth and beaming eyes; dimples in her cheeks, and the distaff of promise in her hands. He looked at her and was dazzled.

"I wanted to help," said Sorrow, "but he grew ever worse."

" You help him!"

Märchen laughed.

"Go your ways and leave him to me; I will manage him. I know all. You are once more weary of the world and want to die, and have no talent, and men are all bad, very wicked indeed, and faithless, and have deserted you, and do not believe in you. Oh, you poor, poor human soul! Why do you not become a butterfly and sleep on a flower? He knows that he has wings, and that his flower has scent, and that his meadow is quite full of blossoms. What does he care whether the others see it since he sees it! And

now look here; I have come back, although you scarcely deserve it, you doubter. Look at this heavy laden distaff, that is for you, only for you, if you will listen to me."

And Märchen began to spin and sing and narrate all night long, and her friend wrote and wrote, without knowing that his pencil moved; he thought he had only heard and listened. He wrote down thoughts and songs and poems; they streamed like living fire from under his hand. And what he wrote moved the world. Men thought his thoughts after him, and sang his songs, and wept over his stories, and knew not that the poet who had given them all these things was sad unto death, misunderstood of all, and that Sorrow visited him far oftener than Märchen.

They called him a child of the gods and a

genius, and knew not that he was a man for whose soul Sorrow and Märchen struggled ceaselessly, and who had suffered so much grief and seen so many wonders that his strength was broken. Ay, the children of the gods must suffer much on earth, and Märchen only visits those that have been proved, and ever departs from them if they have made themselves unworthy of her. Once she told at parting the tale which follows:—

THE TREASURE SEEKERS.



The Treasure Seekers.



HE Philosopher and the Poet set out together on a pilgrimage, to seek after the hidden treasure of cognition I and

to raise it. They had been told that it lay buried there where the rainbow touches the earth, and that it was quite easy to find. The Philosopher dragged instruments with him, and began

^{&#}x27;Erkenntniss is the German word. The tree of knowledge of good and evil is called in German "der baum der Erkenntniss." The clumsy philosophical term "cognition" alone seems to me to embrace all the author would include in her meaning.—TRANSLATOR.

accurate measurements, and as often as he saw a rainbow he carefully measured the distance. determined the spot with mathematical accuracy, hurried thither and began to dig. Poet, meanwhile, laid himself in the grass and laughed and toyed with the sunbeams. They played about his happy brow, they told to him bright fairy tales of dreamland, and showed him the life and working of nature. He grew familiar with all plants and creatures, he learnt to know their speech, and he became versed in their secret whisperings and sighs. Ay, all created things came to have faces for him, from the tenderest plant and the most insignificant beast, and before his eyes were unrolled deeds full of woe and joy.

When at last the Philosopher, with solemn look, torn hands, and weary back, rose from

his shaft back into daylight, laden with some new stones, he marvelled when he saw the Poet's face radiant, as though he had heard wonders.

"How transfigured you are, you lazy one!" he said angrily.

"Who tells you that I am lazy?"

"You always remain here on the surface while I go into the depths."

"Perhaps the surface, too, offers some solutions, and perchance I read these."

"What can the surface offer? One must penetrate into the depths. I have as yet not found the right spot in which the promised treasure lies, but I have made some most important discoveries, though never yet the right ones, those that I apprehend."

"Let us seek further," said the Poet.

Suddenly he held his friend by the arm, and pointed with breathless delight.

"Another rainbow!" cried the Philosopher, and began his measurements.

But the Poet had seen behind the sun-glittering rainbow a wondrous form with black hair and large, sad eyes. She seemed to wait for him; then she turned away slowly. As though demented, the Poet rushed after her; he forgot the aim of his pilgrimage, forgot his friend, who had descended into a new shaft. He only hurried after that wondrous being whose dark eyes had sunk into his soul. Over hill and dale, from house to house he followed the fair form. He saw the world and its agonies, wherever he looked he beheld woe, for in his own heart dwelt the greatest woe, the gnawing pangs of love. He ever thought he must attain to his enchantress,

who stepped in front of him so calmly, through the falling autumn leaves, across the soft snow, in the bitter north wind—north, south, east, and west, ever unapproachable. Once or twice she looked round after him, and her gaze only increased his yearning.

At last Spring neared on the wings of the wind. At the spot whence the Poet had set out the fair form halted. Now he should reach it. But at that moment a hurricane broke loose that shook the world. Forests were uprooted, and all the sluices of heaven seemed opened. The Poet crossed the foaming mountain stream at the peril of his life, and came up to her who stood calm amid all this uproar, and only gazed at him. He seized her hand.

"You are mistaken in me," she said, sadly.
"I wanted to flee from you because I love you,

for I bring you no happiness. I am Sorrow, and must leave you a heavy heart and serious thoughts. Farewell! You have found your treasure; now you need me no longer."

So speaking she vanished.

The hurricane had changed into a fine, drizzling rain, through which the Spring sunbeams pierced to the Poet. At that moment the Philosopher rose out of the earth richly laden. He let all his burden fall, folded his hands, and cried—"Why, you lucky wight, you stand in the very midst of the rainbow, straight upon the treasure."

"Who? I?" said the Poet, waking from his stupor. Then he threw himself to earth and wept aloud and cried—

"Oh that I had never been born! I suffer unspeakable torture."

The Philosopher shrugged his shoulders and began to dig anew.

"There stands one right upon his treasure," he said, "and does not know it; and when I tell him he weeps. Oh these poets!"

A LIFE.



A Life.



WANTED to find Truth. Then Sorrow took me by the hand, and said—

"Come with me, I will lead you to Truth, but you must not faint or fear by the way."

"I! I fear nothing; and I am so strong I could carry mountains."

Sorrow looked at me pityingly, and gave no answer, but led me into a hall that was vast and high and airy, filled with wondrous strains of music, glorious pictures, and statues. I wan-

dered among them bewildered. There was nothing to fear here.

"See," said Sorrow, "here live the Arts; you may choose one of them. But of your own accord you must select that which suits you; and it will help you on the road to Truth."

Then I laid my hand on an instrument-

"Music tempts me," I said; "I will sing and play like a god, an it cost me my life and my happiness."

With what ardour, what fire did I begin to play! I followed Music like an adored mistress. I besought her to lead me to Truth. But she ever went too fast or soared above my head, while I played till my hands failed me. Song sounded weak and small in my throat, instead of sobbing and storming. Then I ran into the Wood in my distress, and it comforted me.

One day Sorrow touched my shoulder.

"You still play badly, you still sing feebly; let us go farther: you are no artist."

I laid aside my instrument and wept.

"Hush!" said Sorrow; "you wanted to carry a mountain."

And she led me into a large, solemn, dimlylit room, that was full of books from floor to ceiling.

"Here is food for your spirit," said Sorrow; "seek, seek; in Science lives Truth."

I scated myself in a tall, worn armchair, and began to learn. But I could only study slowly, for ever my thoughts would wander their own ways. Now the fire burned too brightly and told me fairy tales; now the wind howled round the old house, so that I thought I must away, and the letters grew dim to my eyes. I

strove to check this hapless fantasy that held me back on the road to Truth; but it was stronger than I. Sometimes it pressed a pencil into my hand, and then I wrote secretly poor little verses, which I hid from the very books, from the very air of the room. At last I threw myself back in the chair and cried—

"Wisdom, too, is not for me. She seems to me dead and dusty, and I—I desire to live."

"Do you want that?" said Sorrow. "But then you must not fear."

"I do not fear, I want to live."

Then I stood beside a sick-bed where a lovely gifted boy struggled with Death. His sufferings exceeded the measure of the endurable, yet Sorrow would not quit him. But Courage, too, remained at his side. Two years the terrible struggle lasted, and I asked—

"Where is Truth? Is this to live?"

When he died I trembled, for the first time, for fear. Then Sorrow took me from one death-bed to another. How many fair maiden flowers that had grown up beside and with me did I see fade! And I wept till my eyes were dim.

" Is this to live?" I asked again.

Then Sorrow took me with her on long journeys to the North, South, East, and West. I saw all men, all arts, all treasures, the mighty sea, and the petty towns, till I grew homesick for the old house in which I had seen so many die, in which my father had now closed his eyes. For when I came back I found his armchair empty. Then I was ready to die of grief.

"What," said Sorrow, "die already? And you could carry a mountain? Why, you have not lived yet, for you have not loved."

While she said this she laid her hand on my heart, and like a mighty stream love entered in with song and rejoicing. Only the Wood saw it, and it rejoiced with me, and yet more secretly I wrote now and again a little poem.

But Truth was not in love, neither was it in renunciation, for I murmured and knew not why I should renounce. Sorrow's hand lay heavy on my arm, and for a long time my steps were weak and slow. I no longer sought after Truth. But at last I seemed to see that she must lie in Work, in great, rich Work. When Sorrow heard me say this, she raised my drooping head and pointed before me.

"Here stands a good man, and waits for you. Will you love him your life long? Here is your path, it is rough and stony, and leads past precipices to steep heights. Will you walk on it?

And there lies work for you, mountains high. Will you carry it?"

"I will," I said.

Then Sorrow led me into marriage, and made me a mother, and laid great rich labours upon my shoulders. I groped about to find the right path, and we had to meet with mistrust and misunderstanding, and on the steep path stood hate and strife. But I did not fear, for I was a mother. But not many years was this high dignity mine, my child's fair eyes closed, and I laid his curly head in the grave. Yet I stood erect, notwithstanding the fire in my breast, and I asked of Sorrow—

"Where is Truth? Now that all earthly joy, all earthly hopes have been borne to the grave, there remains for me nothing but Truth; I have a right to find her."

Then Sorrow pressed into my hand a pencil, and said—" Seek."

And I wrote and wrote, and knew not that I exercised an art, for since years I had renounced with heavy heart to be an artist. I sought to do good where I could. I learnt to understand men and to think myself into their innermost being; but I did not find Truth. My steps once more grew heavy and weary, until at last, conquered by sickness, I had to lie down. And during this long illness I tasted all life's bitterness, all chagrin and despair that can reside in one poor human breast, and I desired to die. But Sorrow taught me to be well again, and ever faster flew my pencil, ever richer streamed my thoughts, ever wider grew my field of labour, ever sterner the care for others' weal.

Then the ground beneath our feet trembled and War drew nigh with his companions. His breath was thunder, his eye fire, his hand the lightning. The cloak that enfolded him wrapped the whole heavens in black night. We staked life and wealth and honour, and our heart's blood fell to earth in the terrible struggle, from which our trusty ones, who stood by us as firmly as we stood by them, issued victorious. It was my part to heal the wounds and soften the sufferings. But neither was Truth here. True, we came forth from the strife fearless and purified, but already envy and jealousy lurked on our path, and made it slippery and unsafe.

"Oh, Truth, Truth," I cried, "my youth is past; I have fought the hardest fights and I still live, but I have not yet seen Truth."

"There she stands," said Sorrow, and when I

raised my eyes I saw in the distance, besides a silent water, a little child whose eyes gleamed.

" Is that child Truth?" I asked.

Sorrow nodded.

"She is not to be feared, is she?"

But while Sorrow spoke thus, the child grew taller and taller until she held the whole earth in her hand, and embraced the whole heavens.

"Do you see Truth," said Sorrow. "And now look within yourself; she is there too."

And as I gazed within, I cried-

"Wherefore have I suffered and fought? she was ever there, about me, and in me, and now I will die."

" Not yet," said Sorrow.

Then it grew misty before my eyes, and I saw nothing more. But Sorrow took me by the hand, and led me further.

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